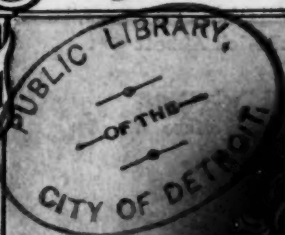


# LIPPINCOTT'S

## MONTHLY MAGAZINE

JANUARY 1907



FICTION

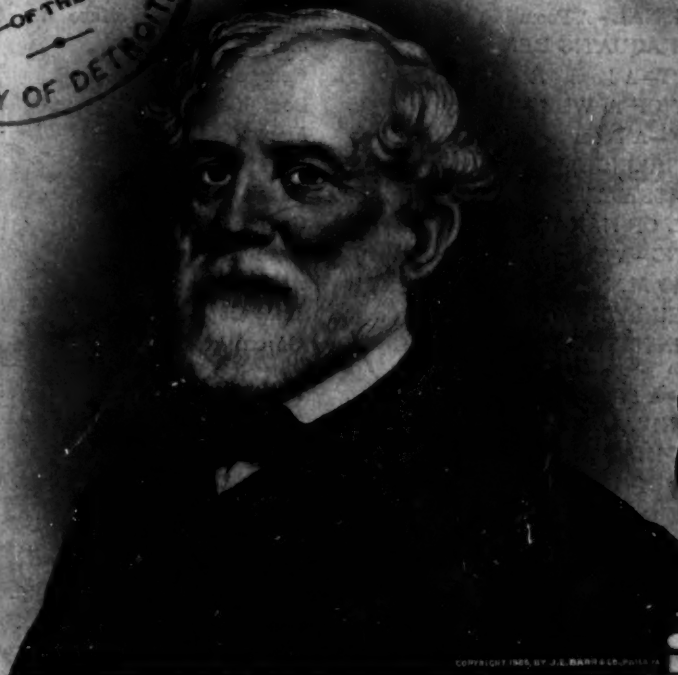
HUMOR

POETRY

LITERATURE

SCIENCE

TRAVEL



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ROBERT E. LEE—BORN JANUARY 19, 1807

**Mrs. General Pickett's  
Personal Memories  
of Robert E. Lee**

**"LOVE AMONG THIEVES"**

COMPLETE NOVELETTE BY GRACE MacGOWAN COOKE

NINE CLEVER SHORT STORIES

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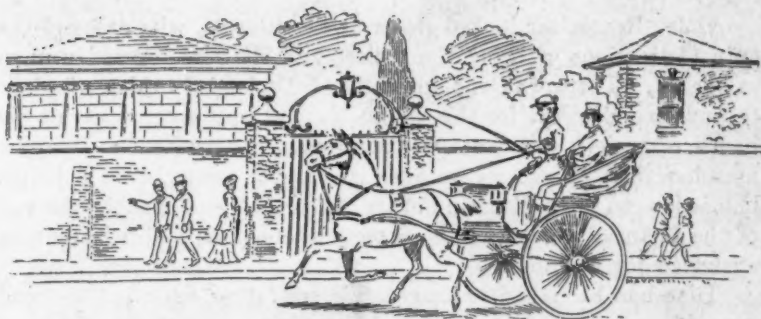
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# LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

JANUARY, 1907



## LOVE AMONG THIEVES

By GRACE Mac GOWAN COOKE

### I.

“PRETTY good for one afternoon.”

Mrs. Gabriel Roache-Dunning let the notes and checks, with a few scattering coins, drip through her soft white fingers into her silken lap, where they fell upon the big roses of her kimono, looking as though those expensive blossoms were enjoying a shower of the only kind of rain that can produce them. The girl standing before her, drawing on long gray gloves, nodded.

“Do you wish me to order violets for the table, or valley lilies?” she asked.

“Lilies. Don’t fail to tell Madame that I won’t take that wrap unless she has it done for me to-morrow.”

The girl murmured something in which the words “try it on” were audible.

“Of course I promised to try it on—but you’ll do just as well. You’ve worn my frocks enough to know that we’re practically the same figure. A week ago? Well, you’ll go and try it on to-day, and Madame will have to have it ready to-morrow or I’ll not take it. Those tradeswomen impose upon one if one is too good-natured.”

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Again the girl nodded, this time smiling, whether at the idea of Mrs. Roache-Dunning being imposed upon, or the bare supposition that the lady could ever be too good-natured, did not appear.

"Get a receipt for this," directed the seated woman, gathering up the notes and checks and thrusting them into a dainty chamois bag. "The bank-book will show, of course, but I prefer to have a receipt also. I should loathe bridge if I lost, but there's enough here to pay for a frock."

Violet Rensselaer looked down at her hostess, who enjoyed the twin distinctions of being the ugliest and the best-dressed woman in her set. There was enough in her little bag of bridge winnings to buy several frocks for this young beauty, who, a pensioner at the hands of society, was entertained oftener in the Roache-Dunning mansion than elsewhere, because its master remembered old-time obligations to the girl's grandfather, when that grandfather was one of the financial powers of the Street, where plain Gabriel Dunning struggled for foothold.

Time had brought its changes. Violet's father, educated to spend money, made the best use of his training; an elegant man, a charming fellow, he had let the great fortune slip through those finely moulded fingers of his, as Mrs. Roache-Dunning dropped the notes a moment since, till all was gone save a pittance of income which barely paid for his expensive chambers, or which did not, perhaps, pay for them directly, but enabled their occupant to live in such style that he could afford to be in debt.

His success at games of chance had become proverbial. Luck, the gambler's doxy, followed him whom the more staid concubine Fortune had deserted, and his wealthy friends were becoming shy of a man who made his game so uniformly profitable. Still, there were always new people glad for a time to be associated with the distinguished old name, and Delancey Rensselaer faced life blithely. His wife was long since dead; his one daughter inherited the family beauty; and if there was no family money left to gild it—why, beauty unadorned is adorned most. Violet had been expensively educated abroad, while the Rensselaer fortune was going; she came home to find that there was a place for her in the house of a childless cousin, a doctor in moderate circumstances in a suburb, where she plainly was a burden, where at the best that could be offered she lived like a princess in exile. From this fusty little house she could not be counted on to make the grand marriage which everybody predicted for her, hoped of her, demanded from her. Dr. Palmer and his wife willingly saw her go from one wealthy acquaintance to another, to make those visits, her forays into the kingdom she was expected to conquer. Her father fitfully provided funds for her dress.

Sometimes a very old friend of the family made her a gift. As Mrs. Roache-Dunning hinted, there had been the loan of frocks, a thing which, when it took place last, Violet had vowed through shut teeth should never occur again.

Impulsive, warm-hearted, the girl's convent training stood her in good stead, that she should not wear a bleeding heart on her sleeve. Just now she looked down smiling inscrutably at the woman who gave her house-room at a husband's behest, and because her beauty added lustre to a *ménage*, and who dropped sometimes into a tone one uses with an employee rather than a guest. Well, her services were paid for, if not in coin current.

"I have some ideas for the dinner to your Californian," she said.

"My Californian!" echoed Mrs. Roache-Dunning, shaking the notes down in the little bag and tying the thong with a quick twist. "My Californian! Yours, you mean—or the one I am trying to get for you."

"I'll talk them over with you if you have time this afternoon," the girl went on imperturbably. "I think they are rather new, and may be good."

"I wish you could say as much of your frock for that occasion," complained Mrs. Roache-Dunning. "Are you determined to wear that old mauve? I think it's the last way in the world to get a man. This Western barbarian may be disgustingly rich himself, but genteel poverty is not likely to attract him."

A tinge of color started into the firm white oval of Violet's cheek. "I have nothing else," she said indifferently. "I'll freshen it somehow."

"Now you're forty miles up in the air, and the balloon still rising!" fretted the other. "I wanted to offer you that yellow of mine. You look divine in it; but when you get on that princess-of-the-blood-royal air, I haven't the impudence."

"Thank you. It's dear of you; but, really, I thought we'd decided against that sort of thing. I couldn't get into the yellow with that tight front, anyhow. It would have to be all pulled to pieces to loosen those folds and drop the girdle for my wear."

The composure of an idol was Mrs. Roache-Dunning's, yet a little flicker ran across her ugly small face as she suggested: "Oh, I shouldn't mind having you do that; and you're such a clever needle-woman, you could drop it in fifteen minutes."

Violet turned and busied herself gathering her belongings from a small table. She remembered now that she had heard Dorine, the maid, ask her mistress whether the yellow gown was to be sent to Madame Hague for alteration, and that the reply was: "No, I have another plan for it." This was the other plan.

For a bitter moment she envied the seamstress who could come into this woman's house and do a day's work for a day's wage. Then she put the idea away from her. Her life was a sliding morass of false values, false conclusions, worthless effort. It could not be made over in a morning, before one went down town shopping.

"I think the lace on your yellow needs renewing," she said. "That stuff with the appliqués didn't wear well."

"No," and once more a flicker ran across the triple brass of Mrs. Roache-Dunning's features. "I thought if you would take your water-colors and tint it as you did that lace stock you had last summer, it would be improved, perhaps."

"Oh!"—the girl was stirred out of her passive attitude. "Mrs. Dunning, I painted on that stock two days; there are miles of lace on the yellow. It's an orchid pattern, isn't it? It ought to have a week's hard work, to do it at all; and to do it well—why, the frock is hardly——" She checked herself, forbearing to add, "worth it."

"It's a week—and more—till our dinner," supplied her hostess briefly. The tone suggested that she was addressing a housemaid.

Violet had long ago put her pride in her pocket—which was otherwise empty—but it was beginning to stir in its sleep and crowd that small receptacle.

"We have the golf match to-morrow," she said, in a perfectly colorless voice; "Thursday those people are to be here; Friday is the automobile show; and Saturday is entirely taken, you know."

"Oh, those are all daylight performances. You can call off your engagements at night, except the opera; I want you then. The gown is to be worn by artificial light, so the tinting should be done by it anyhow."

The girl dropped her eyes to her gloved hands, which shook a little. She had not been through three social seasons, maintained on such precarious footing, to break down and weep over a thing like this. But something mightier than tears rose up in her and demanded utterance.

"I think, on further consideration, I shall order a new frock," she found herself saying in steady tones.

"Oh," drawled her hostess, with an indescribable circumflex. "If you can do that—of course—but really, Violet, I'm positively superstitious about this man. You remember I presented Blake Penderly to you, and helped you all I could with that affair. For goodness' sake, don't let this one turn out as that did!"

"Accursed is he who lets things happen," said Violet, smiling with white lips. "I did my poor little best with Blake Penderly. When he found that he preferred a woman with money to a woman

without—even then, as you know, I did my best. No man—they say that not even a horse—can do more.”

She leaned forward and took the bag of money from the older woman's lap. Mrs. Dunning studied the exquisite features as they came close to her own.

“Where did you hear that?—‘Accursed is he who lets things happen.’ Made it up? Well, it covers the case. Don't let things happen—*make* things happen. Take hold of your life with both hands, instead of elegantly lifting it between your finger and thumb.”

The beautiful face had shut down, after its instant of revelation. Not to Bellona Dunning could she come with the doubts, terrors, shames, which should have been wept out on a mother's breast.

“I will be as quick as I can, so as to have James and the trap back in time for you to go to the luncheon,” she said. “I believe you prefer it.”

“Better select that dinner frock this morning,” the older woman called after her; and Violet suspected a ring of incredulous derision in the voice.

## II.

As the smart vehicle, with its perfectly liveried driver, well-groomed horses, and beautiful young occupant, wound its way into the great city, Violet's unseeing eyes were upon her surroundings, but her mind was elsewhere. Motherless since babyhood, product of chance hospitality and French convent training, the young creature was painfully evolving a moral code of her own. From the white-hot depths of her humiliation she dragged it, and hammered it upon the anvil of self-contempt with raging blows. Later the chill of fear, an emotion her high-couraged soul had yet to make acquaintance with, might harden her resolve for good or ill.

Caught in a jam, two women in a street-car looked out and commented upon her as though she were an actress behind the footlights. Born to the publicity of the ultra-fashionable life, her high-bred face gave no indication that she heard them; yet she noted that they were dressed in what sought to be an imitation of her own exquisite tailor-made simplicity.

“I don't think that gray becomes her—she's too pale. But it does look awful swell,” opined the girl sitting farther from the window.

“Pale—I should say she was! Those women burn the candle at both ends. Well, I wouldn't live a society life, so frivolous, and doing no good to the world! Just look at her turnout; ain't it elegant? Oh, goodness me! it seems as if some folks had all the luck in the world.”

These contradictory observations brought a faint smile to Vio-



let's lip. She was burning the candle at both ends. She was not to be envied, but she saw how enviable she did appear to these lookers-on at her estate.

She glanced once more at their comfortable clothing—honestly paid for, no doubt, with honest money—and felt that she envied them.

At the corner she halted her driver to buy a bunch of violets for the front of her frock; it rankled in her mind that the woman on the street car had said she was too pale for the gray, and she chose carnations instead. As she was fastening them in her coat lapel, the bleary-eyed old crone who vended them looked up and said:

"Lemme keep the change, beauty. Some man'll give you plenty more."

"Shall I speak to the policeman, miss?" asked James in his quiet, well-trained voice, turning his head alertly.

"No. Just drive on," was the equally low-toned reply.

Arriving at the small parlors which bore the name of Hague on their shining windows, Violet tried on the evening wrap as Mrs. Dunning had instructed her.

"I'll send it out early next week," the Belgian assured her.

"I'm sorry, Madame, but that will not do. Mrs. Roache-Dunning must have it to-morrow. She especially cautioned me to tell you so."

"To-morrow!" The big hands with their many rings went out in an expressive movement which accompanied the rising shoulders. "If she had come to try it on a week ago, as she promised——"

"I know—I know. But Mrs. Dunning is—you know she will certainly not accept it if she says she will not."

The modiste pushed back the ivory-tinted folds with a gesture of despair, called in an attendant to remove them, and turned to serve her customer further.

A frock, now—would Miss Rensselaer be good enough to look at it and tell Mrs. Roache-Dunning about it? Mrs. Dunning liked bargains. Well, that was right. If ladies had money, that was no reason for them to waste it when bargains were to be had. And such a bargain—this!

As she talked, a pale-faced young girl in rusty black was bringing in boxes which opened to disclose a dinner frock of pearl chiffon over flesh-white satin. The faint opalescent glow of the combination was carried out in clasps, buckles, and borderings of imitation opals. No lace appeared upon the gown, which billowed softly as an evening cloud, and came everywhere to blunt, puff-like edges. Simplicity itself—but expensive simplicity.

Would Miss Rensselaer try it on? Oh, that was so kind—as she saw the young lady already removing her wraps to do so.

Costume and girl were bundled into a little white-and-gold cubiculum where a great mirror, one spindle-legged gilt chair, and a slender couch formed the sole furniture.

Then Madame was called away to attend to another purchaser, and the tall, pliant young figure was endued with the shimmering opalescent folds without her assistance. In spite of her own desperate preoccupation—perhaps because that preoccupation was painful—the face of the little fitter caught Violet's attention again and again. A quaint young creature she was, with the three-cornered kitten face and big eyes which seemed meant for mirth and mischief, and which are so heart-breaking in their naïf sorrow.

The youthful aristocrat thought idly that this girl looked like one of Boughton's Puritan maidens—in a cheap ready-made! She smiled to herself at the combination, and went on settling mist-like folds around her firm white shoulders.

"I think it needs taking in there across the back," she suggested. "Look at it when I stand perfectly erect. Now. Isn't there too much fulness there?"

In the mirror she caught sight of the girl's face, when the seamstress supposed herself unseen. Violet had never seen a countenance so drenched, so drowned, in woe. The eyes were more pathetic than those swollen from weeping. They looked out at life as though they had wept the fountain of tears dry long since.

"What's the matter? Are you ill?" demanded the young beauty, turning suddenly to confront the girl who waited upon her.

"Nothing—thank you. No, Miss Rensselaer, I—I'm not ill. I think this flounce wants looping a bit." And the seamstress knelt, bending her head to hide her face.

"Never mind the dress," said Violet, pulling away from the kneeling girl. "It's perfect—and much too pretty for the woman who will wear it," she added under her breath.

For a moment the seamstress knelt, looking up at the tall, regal figure before her with hopeless eyes. Then she pitched forward and quietly fainted upon the billowy folds of silk and chiffon which she had been trying to adjust.

Unable to move for fear of tearing the train of fragile stuff which was held down by the girl's weight, Violet called Madame's name, preferring that to the time-honored cry of "Help!"

At her voice the girl on the floor quivered, tried to sit up, and moaned faintly:

"Don't tell on me! Don't call anybody—they'll find out. I'll be better in a minute. Oh, thank you! You're so good. If Madame Hague knew——"

Violet drew up her long train, which was now released, stepped

swiftly to the door and locked it, swept her street suit from the couch, and helped the girl to lie down.

"Never mind," she said quietly. "I'll put the pins in where those seams were to be altered. Then I'll have to change to my own frock. That will give you time to pull yourself together. Does Madame Hague discharge you girls if you are ill?"

The blunt query brought the blood to the pale face. The sewing-girl nodded with closed lips.

"Sometimes she sends us away when she is afraid that we are going to be ill," she said finally. "She—she knows that sickly people cannot work well, of course; and then, if we actually get down while she is employing us, we might expect help from her."

To Violet Rensselaer's soul, already up in revolt against the conditions of her life, it seemed as though this girl were a poor little sister.

"Haven't you a home you can go to?" she asked, as she tied an immaculate four-in-hand before the mirror.

"Not in New York. I came from Virginia, and it would cost more to go back there than to—well, than to pay the debt I owe, and that I am sure is going to make me sick unless I can pay it. You see, it's my mind, not my body, that ails. I've worried over the thing till I can't sleep."

"But if you could go back to Virginia, there are places where you might stay, aren't there? I've always heard that Southern people were warm-hearted—and small towns are not like New York."

"Oh, yes," replied the girl on the couch, wearily. "I haven't any kin left but one cousin, who doesn't live in Virginia any more; but I've got plenty of old friends who'd be glad to have me till I rested up. It isn't that. It's the debt, and—and other things—that just kills me."

"Other things?" echoed Violet.

"I'm afraid I'll cry if I talk about it," said the girl, sitting up and looking at her with the simplicity of a child.

"Cry, then," counselled Violet, smiling a little. "It may help you. I've heard women say that a good cry was all the relief in the world. I can't speak from experience, for my woes are not generally weepable."

The other also smiled, a faint, drenched little smile. "I came from Albemarle County," she began succinctly. "It sounds like a paragrapher's joke to say it, but we were rich people before the war. My mother was a widow for fifteen years, and earned her living and mine by sewing. That was at home, you know; she went to the houses of friends, who treated her almost as a guest. Everybody was poor, more or less, and I never knew what the horrors of lacking money meant till mother died and I came to New York."

"It does make a difference," agreed Violet, pinning her hat in place and adjusting her veil. It seemed to her that if those in her world were as poor as herself, all her problems would be solved.

"In spite of its being hard to get used to the new ways, I did pretty well till last summer. Mother taught me my hand-work, and Madame gives me an extra price because I am excellent at finishing and fitting. But the hot weather in the dreadful brick and stone and iron city seemed to nearly kill me. I'm used to almost living out of doors in the summer, and when I'd leave the shop in the evenings I'd be so exhausted I could scarcely walk to my car."

Violet's face clouded. Money—money—money—if she only had money! It seemed that it was the panacea for all ills. The faltering, whispering voice resumed:

"There was a man—a gentleman—he—well, he overtook me one evening, when I was trying to walk home, and almost fainted, as I did just now. He said I needed fresh air—Heaven knows it was true. He went with me almost home, for fear I should fall on the street. He was so big and kindly that I never thought of resenting it. At home in Virginia, you know, we always speak to any well-dressed white person, and suppose that everybody means well. Then he met me every evening for a while and walked with me, to get me not to take the car. He said that he was going that way every evening. I didn't know till afterwards that he came just to meet me. The walks did me ever so much good, and I was getting stronger, when we had an extra press of work at the shop for Miss Van Alstyne's wedding. All her *lingerie* was made by hand, and most of it hemstitched. You know the papers made a great fuss about her having it done here instead of in Paris; they called it patriotism, and a good many fine names; but I was the best hand-worker Madame Hague had, and it almost killed me."

The seamstress arose with a sigh. "I mustn't tell you any more of this," she said; "Madame would be furious if she knew I did it."

But Violet seated herself on the couch.

"Go on," she said. "I'm intensely interested. You think I have an easy time in the world, but maybe my situation is not so different from yours."

The little Virginian wiped her eyes and began again:

"The gentleman I speak of had got to be a great friend of mine by this time. I didn't know something about him which I learned afterward, and which makes a great difference; but he was so kind and so devoted, and used to be waiting for me when I'd get through here at ten or twelve o'clock at night. I don't know how I'd have got home without him. I'm such a country-bred creature that I've never altogether got used to the New York streets at night. He

wanted me to accept presents from him, but I wouldn't do that, although he seemed to have plenty of money. Finally, when I broke down from overwork, he took a new apartment for me—a lovely room, where I have such a beautiful view and nice fresh air. I couldn't do anything about it; I was so dazed with exhaustion that I didn't even think anything about it till I got well, and then I was frantic. I found—I found out this thing about him that I speak of, and it made his daring to make love to me an insult. Of course he tells me that he's unhappy and suffering; but lately he's been very angry at me, and has threatened me with the debt on my room. The landlord will take up the collection of it, turn me out in the street, take everything I have, and come here to Madame to lay claim to any wages that there are coming to me. It will cost me my place; it will disgrace me. Oh, I can't bear it—I can't bear it—I can't bear it! I wish I were dead! Forgive me—oh, pardon me—don't notice anything I say——”

The fragile creature covered her pale face with shaking fingers and broke into sobs.

“I've gone down to the river,” she went on, more quietly, “and looked at it, and wondered if that wouldn't be the best end for it all. But the story would get home to my friends in Virginia. No—no; not even that escape is for me—a Randolph; and everywhere I turn it seems hideous.”

Violet Rensselaer's handsome face clouded. *Noblesse oblige*. Here was another girl whose pride of race traversed her circumstances and formed a cross upon which to crucify her. “I'm sorry for you,” she said at last gently. “I wish I could help; but I'm a beggar myself.”

“He waits for me every night still,” the girl whispered; “and he keeps saying that he loves me, and saying how much easier it would be for me to forget that thing I found out about him and let him take care of me. But I can't. My father's daughter can't do that. We have been honest, honorable people for hundreds of years. The name is respected back there in Virginia. I can't do that.” She looked up with a little wan smile struggling through her tears. “I think it will be the river, after all,” she breathed.

Violet had parted her lips to offer help and to ask the name of the persecutor, when Madame's hand rattled the knob of the door. The seamstress opened it. Madame's frowns swiftly smoothed themselves when she found that the key had been turned while Miss Rensselaer was dressing.

“Then, you like the costume?”

“Yes. I'll take it. I have marked the alterations—or, rather, your fitter has marked them,” returned Violet.



"Oh, you'll take it *now*? Well, I think that's better. Such a bargain is sure to be snapped up, and I had one or two other ladies to whom I expected to show it to-day if Mrs. Roache-Dunning didn't care for it."

"Mrs. Dunning!" The full significance of what she had said flashed upon Violet's mind. But Madame was standing tablet in hand and pencil upraised.

"You'll have this charged with the wrap, of course?" she inquired suavely.

Waiting for no reply, she entered the item and bustled away, following the little seamstress, who carried billowy arm-loads of opalescent gauze.

Violet reached the street—how she never knew—and gave the order to drive to a large department store where purchases of certain advertised articles were to be made for Mrs. Dunning, who, as Madame Hague had said, never scorned a bargain.

And as the carriage threaded its way through the crowded streets, Violet's mind hammered wildly at her problem. She had bought an expensive gown at Madame Hague's for Thursday night, and it was charged upon her hostess's account. No hope that the sharp-eyed woman of affairs would overlook it. The gown was bought. There was no retreat. She, Violet Rensselaer, was a thief unless she could find, between now and the first of the month, two hundred and fifty dollars with which to pay that bill. She swung the chamois bag listlessly in her gloved fingers; here was more than enough to liquidate the debt. A bitter smile twisted her young mouth into unlovely lines as she realized (brave creature—unflinchingly honest with her own soul) that, but for Mrs. Dunning's strict requirement of a receipt, she would have been tempted to use the money.

As she purchased some linen for the household, a little, bent old woman touched her elbow gently, and mutely presented a small picture-card for sale. This form of begging was not permitted in the store, but Violet forbore to call attention to the poor creature; she only silently negatived the matter by a shake of the head. Passing on to buy ribbon for a color luncheon now *in petto*, she found that she had left her umbrella, a handsome silver-handled affair which matched her costume, at the linen counter. She completed her purchases, leaving the Dunning address, and hurried back. Coming down the long room from the linen counter, she met the little old beggar woman, a big bag on her arm; but now the poor soul carried before her a tightly rolled and carefully sheathed umbrella, whose handle she covered in the most pitiaibly obvious way, with both trembling, corded old hands.

Violet at once recognized her own property, and saw that the woman knew her. What halted her, and stilled the words in which she would have claimed the umbrella, was the agony of fear—of naïve, childish terror—which looked out at her from the thief's eyes. Something tightened in her throat. Tears stung under her eyelids. She turned away her head, and the old woman shuffled past, turning again and again to glance at her with those fear-struck eyes, whose gaze the girl could not sustain.

"What right have I to denounce her?" Violet asked herself as she went down to the waiting carriage. "She is a thief—but what am I? I wish I could forget her eyes. Shall I feel like that if I fail to get the money to pay for my frock?"

And the chilling of the icy finger that this thought laid upon her heart so shook her that she trembled as she climbed into the trap and gave the order, "Home."

### III.

JAMES had not driven half a block when the little chamois bag in her hands reminded Violet of her errand at the bank. She was about to change her order to that destination when, desperately groping for some way out of the pit into which she had fallen, she thought of her father, leaned forward, and told the driver to take her to his apartments.

It was twelve o'clock when she reached the great marble palace which housed Delancey Rensselaer. She found that gentleman about to breakfast, and was gayly urged to join his repast.

"I can't eat a bite, father. I want to consult you about something. Do you mind if I talk while you have your breakfast?"

Delancey made a small *moue*, that might have been approbation, protest, or disgust. It ended in a laugh, and one saw clearly where Violet got her beauty, or a portion of it. There were the same height and elegance of proportion, the same fine eyes; and the father's whitening locks above these only added to their almost boyish charm and their brightness.

"You know the legend," he said resignedly. "The serpent, when he couldn't cozen Eve any other way, spread seven basketfuls of talk under the tree. While he picked the apple, she gathered up these, and her daughters have been unpacking them—for the benefit of mankind—ever since. Yes, dear girl, you may open a small hamper of talk if you find it necessary."

Thus permissioned, Violet seemed to find it hard to begin. She sat drawing her long gloves through her fingers across her knee, looking down at them.

"I'm in terrible trouble," she burst out at last.

"Who is exempt?" smiled her father mockingly. "Vi, you're a beauty. I gave you that. You're well born. You're young. I might add the minor detail that you are well dressed and well housed. What more do you ask of fate? Young people are so demanding. Do you mind if I feed my cat?"

A great snowy Persian, winner of more than one blue ribbon, leaped upon the table at her master's low-spoken invitation. Rensselaer remained with suspended spoon holding the animal at attention. Violet roused herself to say:

"No, father. I told you I couldn't eat anything. Let Juno have her breakfast, certainly."

The affectionate dexterity with which the man ministered to his cat was comparable only to a mother with a babe. Then the canary must be let from its cage, and perched upon his shoulder, pecking seeds held lightly between his lips.

When these offices had been conducted for some time in silence broken only by the man's cooing tones as he addressed the furred pet or the winged one, he turned a laughing glance upon his daughter.

"We're waiting, Violetta," he said. "Juno and Tip and I are holding our respective—and respectful—breaths to hear what you have to say."

The girl looked with slowly filling eyes at the beautiful, exquisitely turned-out man, with his cat and his canary, his ingenuous smile, his long, supple white fingers, and his elegant negligee.

"Father," she began in a low voice—and it was as though she cried out past him to another father, not this elegant trifler at life—"father, I've—I've stolen some money!"

It was out. Crudely, brutally, the statement cut across the finished calm of Delancey Rensselaer's atmosphere. His relaxed figure became suddenly tense and erect in the chair. She was aware, all in a moment, that he was a white-haired old man. And, intolerable to her, she saw in his eyes that fear from which she had fled when it confronted her in the face of the umbrella thief.

"Stolen money!" he whispered hoarsely. "That was a great mistake. From whom? Is it found out yet?"

Pity took her by the throat. What right had she, young, strong, to come and pitch her disasters upon this poor soul who was inadequate to his own problems? Most of all, she longed to blot out that flickering terror in his eyes. She ran to him and knelt, putting her arms about his shoulders.

"Don't look at me like that, father," she begged, breathing in short gasps. "I'll face it for myself. They shan't come to you about it."

He pushed her back fretfully. "Hush! You're frightening Juno. Stand up. Now tell me clearly all about this. It's always a great mistake to commit a crime—an actually classified crime. A daughter of mine had no right to do such a thing. Why, the Rensselaers——" His voice trailed off into silence.

Suddenly raising his head and searching her face: "Whose money was it? How did you get your hands on it?"

"It wasn't money itself," began Violet, speaking rapidly, standing before him like a chidden child, twisting her hands together. "The Dunnings have arranged—I am to meet that Californian—you know—Page Carter—at dinner next week."

The man nodded impatiently; his daughter's matrimonial campaigns were well understood by him.

"I wanted a new frock for the dinner—because of him," she went on, very fast. "I bought one at Madame Hague's, and had it charged to Mrs. Dunning. It cost two hundred and fifty dollars."

With a mighty sigh of relief, Delancey Rensselaer leaned back in his chair. He laughed and struck the table before him softly with his clenched fist.

"Is *that* all? Bellona Dunning will be nasty about it, of course—a woman whose very name is so near that of a sausage cannot help being rather vulgar; but Gabriel Dunning will pay the bill."

Violet wrung her hands in anguish. She had been anxious, a moment gone, to spare him; now she sought feverishly to bring her trouble home to his mind.

"But don't you see, father? I stole the dress, as much as though I'd taken it from her wardrobe? I'm a thief—a thief—a thief!"

She uttered the word in a voice that dropped lower with each repetition, yet with startling energy.

"Sit down," said the old man. "You're excited. Calm yourself. Young people like to use big words—or violent ones. Even you must not connect thievery and the Rensselaers."

"But it was!" burst out the girl rebelliously, as she seated herself at the table's edge, where Juno immediately offered overtures of welcome. "What do words matter? I've done it—I have connected——"

Delancey Rensselaer pushed back his white curls and laughed.

"Oh, you women!" he said. "Bellona Dunning mismanaged that Penderly business for you. I spoke my mind to her about it. I thought then, and I think now, that some infernal feminine jealousy put her up to backing Blake Penderly when he sought to break his engagement with you. She owes you a frock—she owes you a dozen frocks. When the time comes, tell her so and brave it

out. My God! to think that your grandfather's descendant should be reduced to accepting frocks from Bellona Dunning!"

"Accepting—if that were all! Oh, father, you don't understand," said Violet wearily, rising as she spoke. "Never mind. I'm sorry I troubled you, dear. I'll manage some way. I thought"—wistfully—"that if you could let me have the money—all or part of it—I'd go to Cousin Homer's and save up till I could pay you back."

"Nonsense—moonshine!" said her father, rising with alacrity, evidently well pleased at her imminent departure. "You'll feel better by and by. You mustn't run away from this Californian. It's the nearest a hope you've had for some time. I've made the man's acquaintance, and I like him."

Violet was hurrying toward the door with unsteady steps. Her father caught her by the shoulders, turned her around, and kissed her daintily upon the cheek.

"Beauty!" he said.

"Don't," she protested, putting up a hand to push him away. The word brought back the old flower-vender.

"Your Californian is a good deal of a man," observed Rensselaer thoughtfully. "He doesn't play my games, and he has more skill than I at his own. Poker is his specialty, and he's a Napoleon at it. I have never dared go above a dollar ante with him—and I lose more than I can afford at that. I'd rather have him for a son-in-law than an opponent at cards. I'm glad you secured the frock, however you came by it. I applaud your spirit. No—no—no, dear, I haven't a cent to spare you just now. I wish I had. But your Californian is so confoundedly good at poker, and he won't play anything else, and I've been sticking to him to the exclusion of other propositions for some time. No, I haven't a cent, my dear. Not a cent. Good-by. Be good to my daughter."

#### IV.

WHEN Violet reached the bank, she saw the landau of Mrs. Blake Penderly standing at the curb. Inside the building, that lady herself greeted the girl with effusion. Mrs. Penderly was dressed, as usual, beautifully, but a little beyond the occasion. Her great feather boa framed becomingly a foolish small face beneath a splendid plumed hat; yet Violet's trim, mannish lapels and delicate gray felt, with its single eagle's quill, made it seem suddenly flamboyant. A small silken bag with a network of silver and semi-precious stones held Mrs. Penderly's banking operations for the morning.

"Going to make a deposit? I'm cashing checks," she chattered, after greetings were exchanged. "Isn't it ridiculous of me?



I never make a check for more than one hundred dollars. Then, if I mislay it, or anybody gets hold of it, or anything, I don't lose so much."

Violet, who made no checks for a hundred dollars or any other sum, smiled complaisantly.

"I should think it a good plan," she assented, trying to get past to the window of the only disengaged receiving teller.

A tall man came up and took the place as Mrs. Penderly gushed:

"I'm so glad you don't think it silly. Nearly everybody does think nearly everything I do is silly. The teller is mad this morning because I want a thousand dollars and insist on giving him ten checks. I endorsed twelve or fifteen before I left home, and made them payable to bearer, so that I shouldn't keep him waiting a minute; and now he's got it all tangled up, and gone back to ask another man."

"Perhaps your arrangements are a little unusual," suggested Violet wearily.

The tall man at the receiving window had passed on, to be immediately succeeded by a messenger with a coin-sack. As Violet again attempted to elude the conversational Mrs. Penderly, this man turned and gazed full in her distressed face. An hour of mental suffering had set dusk circles beneath the clear eyes and indefinitely pinched and sharpened the fine features. She looked like a woman who had heard a death-warrant, and was only leaning hard on the shoulder of pride that she might limp away to weep her heart out alone. He applied to a paying teller, and busied himself with his own affairs; but something intimate and kind in his regard brought back her own trouble to the girl's mind and set her once more trying to find the way out.

She stood with bent head, going over the possible avenues by which she could secure any money to offer Madame Hague. As though in answer to this urgent search, which was almost a prayer, a pink slip of paper fluttered down past her skirt and rested near the toe of her boot. It was one of Mrs. Penderly's checks.

"I *did* give you ten checks, sir. Look again. I did *not* make a mistake. You will certainly find that you carried ten checks back there. No doubt you left one on the desk," she heard that lady explaining, rather shrilly.

Before the first phrase was uttered, Violet's foot had covered the fallen check.

Afterward, it did not seem to her that this act upon her part was conscious at all. When it was done, she stood and trembled, unwilling to go further with the theft, unable to retreat from it. She

DETROIT, MICH.

wondered if her eyes looked like those of the little old woman who had stolen her umbrella. She was aware of an icy chill at her heart, and through it a sort of exultation that she had taken hold of life with both hands, and was no longer lifting it daintily between finger and thumb.

As she stood so, it seemed that the choice was taken from her; for the teller at the window finally convinced Mrs. Penderly that only nine checks had come into his hands, and that lady reluctantly tendered another.

The girl was just trying to muster courage to bend down and pick up the paper, when some one jostled against her, stooped, and with a murmured "Beg pardon. This is yours, is it not?" lifted the folded pink slip and thrust it into her hand.

It was the tall man whom she had noticed at the window ahead. For one terrible moment she looked into his kind eyes, and withered with all an amateur criminal's terror that he should read the entire story in her face. She was unable to say yes or no, but her fingers closed convulsively on the paper. The man lifted his hat and departed.

"Do you want this window?—or, this man, I mean," Mrs. Penderly babbled. "Oh, you're going to make a deposit. How wealthy and prudent and all that! Poor foolish me, I always seem to be pulling money out of the bank; and Blake scolds me, and even the bank men don't like the way I get it. Are you going to be at the golf match to-morrow? You play so well, you ought to be in it. I love to see the girls with those red jackets and their sleeves rolled up, but I never could play. Blake is a golfomaniac—but you know that, of course."

Violet stood clutching Mrs. Penderly's money and gazing into Mrs. Penderly's vacuous small countenance. As she realized this, she could have screamed with laughter at the memory of the umbrella thief and herself, confronted exactly thus scarce an hour since; half unconsciously her fingers arranged themselves upon the slip of paper as had those of the old woman upon the silver handle. But in her eyes and in her heart was no fear. This was the person whose millions Blake Penderly had married, after jilting her, Violet Rensselaer, so publicly, so humiliatingly, that all her set knew of it. Her chances elsewhere were damaged by it. Her only hope had come to be a man from the West, who would not have heard the shameful story. It was one of life's little ironies that Mrs. Blake Penderly should help her to a chance at realizing that hope. She smiled and slipped the paper into the bosom of her frock.

"I'm afraid I shall miss the golf match," she said sweetly; "but I'll see you and Mr. Penderly at dinner next Thursday. Mrs.

Roache-Dunning and I are trying to be original for the occasion. Pray come prepared to support our blushes and applaud our efforts."

"Somebody says somewhere that there's nothing new under the sun. It is in the Rubaiyat, I think—and how true it is!" rejoined Mrs. Penderly, struggling with her boa, her silver bag, and her trailing skirts. "But you and Bel Dunning can be depended upon to dazzle us, I'm sure. So glad to have met you this morning! One never gets to see one's real friends in New York, except by snatches, tearing around in banks and things."

As Violet moved on to take her place at the window and make deposit of her hostess's funds, requiring a receipt with mechanical exactness, the little pink check inside her bodice gnawed like the fox under the Spartan boy's tunic. She was half afraid that the teller would hear it crackle as she moved, and shifted her papers noisily to cover the sound. She still felt the glow of the robber who has covered a small, mean crime with one more high-handed and telling. Besides, she had not yet made any use of the check—she might not do so. If it were only a hundred dollars, she felt with a sudden blazing up of self-disdain, she would not take the risk. She despised herself for longing so to see the thing; but she had caution enough not to examine it, nor attempt to cash it, at this bank.

Once more in the trap and bowling smoothly toward home, she withdrew the folded paper from her bodice. It felt strangely bulky in her fingers. She opened it, and smothered an exclamation of dismay.

The slip was blank; but it wrapped closely-folded currency to the amount of five hundred dollars!

How long she sat staring at it with fascinated eyes she never knew. The quiet, deprecating voice of James recalled her to herself. He had turned his head when she cried out.

"I'm afraid you'll lose your money, Miss Rensselaer," he said, touching his hat respectfully. "You ought to hold it a little closer in the street here. And the wind's blowing right fresh, too. Beg pardon, miss." Again he touched his hat automatically, and turned his attention from her scarlet cheeks and wide eyes to his horses.

Then, as though some devil whispered the words to her, came the suggestion that this was much safer than the check. Money could not be traced. It was as surely hers now as the air she drew into her lungs. It would pay Madame Hague, and relieve the little Virginia girl.

Mrs. Roache-Dunning, standing in the carriage porch with her wraps on, made sharp inquiry as to why the trap had been kept out so long.

"I suppose it was selecting that dinner gown in which you are to dazzle the Californian," she suggested, rather acidly.

"No," said Violet, as she exchanged places with the older woman; "I didn't take an extraordinary amount of time over my frock. I had the luck to find one which Madame imported for somebody who had since gone into mourning. I thought it very pretty, and it was quite a bargain—only two hundred and fifty dollars. She will send it out with your wrap to-morrow. I think you will admire it;" and Violet briefly described the dress.

"You call it a bargain at two hundred and fifty? Well, it must be handsome! What did you say—opalescent clasps and girdle; pearl chiffon over flesh satin? I think you might have let me look at it before you gobbled it up, you greedy thing! You know I love to pick up a good thing that way."

And she looked curiously at the impassive face of the penniless girl who was a sort of pensioner in her house and had just bought a two hundred and fifty dollar gown.

V.

"I've always wanted a frock of that sort. It makes my green look positively frumpy. I don't know about letting you snap it up."

Mrs. Roache-Dunning looked with eyes in which envy and admiration struggled at the shimmering, changeful folds of the new dinner gown. Violet smiled bitterly as she reflected that the dress was as much Mrs. Dunning's own as the one upon her back; but she hugged the knowledge that in her pocket was the money wherewith to actually purchase it.

"You're such a beauty, Vi—you can wear anything. Don't you want to be a good girl and let me have this? I'll take it off your hands at what you paid for it. Madame could get you up something before Thursday—and for less than half the money."

Not thus would Bellona Dunning have spoken had she known the history of the purchase of this dress. She would have justified her name, no doubt, and let loose the dogs of war.

Violet shook her head. "I like it myself," she said quietly.

"Two hundred and fifty dollars is a great deal for you to spend on a frock, Vi," argued Mrs. Dunning.

The girl lifted her brows with a mocking, supercilious air which brought Delancey Rensselaer sharply before the older woman's mind.

"I suppose your father gave you the money," she hazarded bluntly.

Violet let the supposition stand.

"Robert tells me that you want me to use the electric runabout for my errands this morning," she said. "It's out of order, and I'm afraid I can't manage it alone."

"It has been down to the garage twice in the last week. Those people are intolerable," returned Mrs. Roache-Dunning, the irritation generated by the dress episode finding a good safe channel. "You can go past there and let them look at it again; but I'm sure you'll have no trouble with it. Anyhow, you'll have to use it. Gabriel wants the big car, and I shall take the horses. There's nothing left for you but the runabout, and those things I told you to get cannot be ordered over the 'phone. You have to be there to select them."

Violet had the fighting blood of the Rensselaers in her veins, and the cultivated courage which belongs to the modern young woman who pursues fashionable athletics. She took the runabout to the curb in front of Madame Hague's without accident. There she paid for her frock, explaining that the garment was for herself and not for Mrs. Roache-Dunning. An instant addition of obsequiousness in Madame's manner showed her that the downward path may have its roses, too.

Warm with the relief of this transaction, she asked to see the fitter who had made the alterations in her costume. Madame Hague, all smiles, had the girl sent for.

"Show me some silks—anything," was Violet's low-toned request. "I want to talk to you a moment."

When the table between them was piled with shining stuffs, she leaned across it, a fold laid over her hand, and said: "I got some money very unexpectedly yesterday. It's—it's not exactly mine, but I have the spending of it. The owner—wanted me to make a good use of it. Would you tell me how much the debt is on your room?—how much will pay that and your rent for a couple of months ahead, I mean. I think there is enough that I can let you have it to-day."

The girl behind the counter looked at Violet with adoring eyes which swam in tears. She pressed her lips together.

"Of course I know that's just your lovely, lovely way of helping me so that I needn't feel it's charity," she said softly. "But you couldn't wound me—I'd be glad to take alms from your hands. Yes—I'll be careful. I see Madame is looking at us. Wait a minute. Don't you think this blue is a pretty shade?" She fumbled for a handkerchief as she displayed the lustrous folds. "One hundred and fifty dollars—oh, I have the amount at my tongue's end! If I die they'll find it on my heart, as poor, wretched Queen Mary said they would find 'Calais' on hers."



Under cover of the silks, Violet pushed the money across the counter into the hands of the seamstress.

"Wait, please. Let me give you my name and address," said the girl gently. "I won't hang after you and annoy you; but of course I'm going to try and pay this. I have some plans—you——"

She handed the card as Madame came up, and Violet rose to depart.

On this followed a fagging morning, going from place to place for the bargains which Mrs. Dunning had set down upon her list. The machine behaved admirably, but Violet's mood of exaltation, which had come to its height in her interview with Octavia Randolph (this was the name she read upon the card), ebbed steadily, till the sight of a shoplifter being escorted by the police from the store door to the waiting patrol-wagon sent her shuddering to her vehicle to be alone with her own thoughts.

She looked at her watch. There were three hours at her command. She could turn into the park before reaching the Roache-Dunning mansion. She remembered a remote path where she might find almost the solitude of an untouched woodland. For this spot she headed.

At first, in the crowded streets, the management of her auto engrossed her attention. But when she came to have the way more to herself her movements became mechanical; she shifted brake or lever without thought, her mind busy with her own affairs. A year ago the fact that she had a new dinner frock and was to meet a rich man who was presumably looking for a wife would have filled her with excitement, if not pleasure. Now the trumpet call fell cracked and crazily upon her spirit. The sordid campaign in which she was engaged could not hold her attention. Her strenuous young mind ran on to inquire further of life.

Suppose she met this man from California and succeeded in pleasing him? Suppose she made the game and married him, with his many millions—what then? Plenty of money to buy dinner frocks; plenty of money to pay the debts of seamstresses; independence of Bellona Dunning and her likes forever. But stay—could there be independence inside such a bond? What of the man? Violet was wholesomely heart-free. She smiled as she reflected that it would not be possible for her to dislike another man quite so thoroughly as she had disliked Blake Penderly. Then the disquieting question obtruded itself, would it be possible for her to like one very much better?

She shrugged the thought away and laughed a little. Let the Californian take care of himself—her father had said he was able to do so at cards; let him look to it in the great game of hearts. She

drew out the remainder of her stolen money. Somehow, it looked good to her. It seemed more hers than any cash she had ever handled before: had she not done and dared for it? Had she not suffered for it? It *was* hers.

The past went bitterly before her, stripped of such trappings as her shrinking self-respect would at other times have placed upon it. She thought of the shabby home in Dr. Palmer's family, where she was a burden, and where the utmost stretch of generosity, which she could see taxed the resources of the elderly couple, failed to make what she considered decent comfort. As one who faint-heartedly tallies over the cards of a losing hand, she reviewed many such visits as this to Bellona Dunning; visits fraught with humiliation, with a sort of desperate envy of those surrounding her. She saw her father's white hands breaking bread into a saucer of milk for his cat. He said whimsically that the cat and the canary were the only dependants he could maintain, and that he loved them because their demands were so modest. Had his fortune been such that the needs of her young life were no more to him than the requirements of his pets, he would have loved her too; her presence would have been dear to him. As it was, her heart grew sick with the belief that she darkened his door when she entered it, and left his heart lighter when she went.

Poor father! He had gone gradually down in the world, until he now stood perilously near the line between reputable and disreputable. But she could still have pride in him for that he, so ill fitted to meet them, turned always to life's buffets a face fresh, blithe, composed. If it was his only virtue, it was one that appealed to her; they were of the same spirit there—and he was all she had.

There was her brief engagement to Blake Penderly, when she had expected to be a woman of fortune, when her father had openly exulted in the prospect, and Mrs. Dunning had expressed herself willing to provide the trousseau—for which her husband was to pay, of course. She remembered that she had written, as bidden, to reproach her affianced and beg him not to break the engagement. She remembered that she had allowed herself to be taken to Penderly's office, to personally remonstrate and try to patch up the affair. Surely she was a more shameless woman when she did these things than when she put her foot over the money Blake Penderly's foolish little wife had dropped from her silly fingers. She groped for true values among the facts of her life, and found it hard to guess—to-day—what was right and what was wrong. In her set, success was the only virtue, failure the ultimate crime. This being so, she found herself guilty. Everywhere she looked, failure confronted her.

"Why?" she asked herself. "Surely it is not much that I demand of life. I would be content with a very small part of what the women about me have. None of them are better; few of them are as beautiful. It seems to be beauty and youth and good breeding that my world asks of its women. We are taught to think that these ought to bring wealth. I have them to sell; why have I so miserably failed to find a buyer?"

She jerked the lever of her machine with a nervous hand. It swerved, set itself across the driveway, and, with a hiccup of protest, stood still. In vain she pulled one handle and another, trying desperately to think what the man at the garage had told her to do under such circumstances. She was about to leave her seat, to inspect the machine, when a pleasant voice at her shoulder said:

"Beg pardon. Can I be of any use?"

She turned to look into the eyes of the tall man who had handed her Mrs. Penderly's roll of money. She dropped back on the seat, and for a moment the two regarded each other in silence. The man was first to recover the commonplace note.

"Can I help you?" he urged. "I take it you haven't stopped here purposely." He glanced humorously at the sulky auto, which effectually blocked traffic on the narrow drive.

"Oh—the machine," said Violet, rather blankly.

"Yes, the machine," repeated the new-comer. "I know something about them—my calling is in a mechanical way; perhaps I could persuade it to go on."

Violet smiled in sudden relief.

"I wish you would," she said. "If it were a horse, I might have hopes; but I am afraid I should forget some of the directions concerning this thing."

The man asked in a business-like way for her tool-basket, knelt in the roadway, and began tapping and examining.

"It's thoroughly out of order," he flung over his shoulder, "but I think I can get you to the garage, and there they can attend to it properly."

The auto, under his ministrations, ran a few rods, and stopped again. He had put the lever in her hands for this start; as the machine slowed down and the wheels ceased to revolve, he came up and suggested, as he paused beside her:

"Perhaps I had better telephone for a man. They will send one out, you know."

Violet looked at him frankly. Mrs. Roache-Dunning was careful in the matter of small expenditures—by her dependants.

"I'd rather not," the girl said simply. "It would cost a good deal, and the people at the house might object. If you will show

me what you do to make it go, I think I can get home before nightfall."

He laughed good-naturedly. "If it's as bad as that," he said, "perhaps you will accept me as temporary captain of the ship. I think I might run it better than you, and I will see you to the street anyhow. You came up the Avenue, didn't you?" There was nothing in his manner to suggest that he had followed her and sought this interview.

Seated beside her, the man busied himself with the auto, and it was left to Violet to steal sidelong glances at his preoccupied face. He did not look like a mechanic, yet he had said that this was his business.

Suddenly, "Of course I recognized you at once," she said. "You are the gentleman who handed me the check I—my check that I dropped in the bank yesterday. Thank you so much."

He flashed a quick look of surprise at her. "Certainly I had not forgotten you," he responded. "I am flattered that you should have remembered me."

There fell a long silence, during which the machine seemed to require his close attention. Then, "You knew it wasn't a check," she uttered, almost without her own volition.

"I thought it was not," he said quietly. "It was thicker than a folded paper."

Something in the tone, something in the eyes which studiously avoided hers, disclosed what both tone and eyes sought to hide.

"You knew the money was Mrs. Penderly's!" the girl whispered through white lips.

He sat so long in silence that she thought he was not going to make any reply. He studied his own gloved hand upon the lever of the auto. He seemed painfully unable to look at her. Finally, "I saw the lady drop it," he said in a low tone.

With the words he lifted his eyes, evidently with an effort, and looked squarely at her. What he saw in her face seemed to be more than he could bear. He instantly averted his gaze.

"I——" he began, hesitated, and seemed to come to a sudden resolution. "I make it my business to hang around places where money is handled, and profit by such 'accidents,'" he finished deliberately. "Remember, I only got in to help you down to the street. If you object to riding with a thief, I can still go and telephone for a man from the garage."

"But you didn't steal anything," objected the girl breathlessly. "You gave the money to me. Why did you do that?"

Again the man sought silence, apparently nonplussed by her direct question.

"I—I had seen you before," he faltered, at last. "I wanted you to have the money. I saw you put your foot over it. I saw your face. I thought you—I wanted you to have it."

"You saw me try to steal—and you helped me," supplied Violet bitterly.

The man drew up his shoulders. "Br-r-r!" he said, with a little shiver, and looked at her with remonstrant eyes. "I wish you wouldn't."

"Oh, I have no right to miscall you," the girl went on wildly. "Do you know what I did with that money?"

"Don't tell me," he urged. "It was simply the result of a sudden impulse on my part. The moment before I did it, I didn't know I was going to; and the moment after it was done, I wondered why."

Again the machine came to one of its senseless stops. The man got out to work over it. Violet noted the strong, clean line of his shaven jaw. She felt the influence of his powerful personality. It revolted her that a man who could have conquered his world by honest means should be a petty thief. Yet, when she might have said something of this, her lips were locked by her own misdoing. She longed to justify herself, to tell him how impossible the better course had been made to her, how all that protects and fosters purity and right thinking in most young girls had urged her towards acts which seemed not quite as dishonorable as theft.

"I *will* talk about it!" she said sharply. The runabout was once more lurching uncertainly ahead. "I shall never see you again, of course, but you are the man who put that stolen money in my fingers, and I am going to tell you why I needed it, and what I spent it for. Half of it went for a dinner gown which I am to wear next Thursday, because I am a somewhat shop-worn article on the matrimonial bargain counter here, and it is hoped by my pastors and masters and spiritual advisers that I can ensnare a Western man whom I am to meet then at dinner. Part of-it—and all the rest of it is going that way, too—went to help a poor little sewing girl who was in debt and sick."

Again that curious glance from the man's powerful blue eyes. It seemed to the girl that if he had been in a position to condemn her, and had done so, she could not have borne the glance, with its slant brow above, its hawk-like directness. Without a word, he sprang from the stuttering machine, and began to work over its gear. Once more she studied him. Yes, such a man could conquer anywhere—and he was a common thief!

"I—I—" she began haltingly—"I wish I could say something that is in my mind, before we part. The street is just ahead. This



is a public place for such conversation; but I shall probably never see you again. I want to ask you if there are no better things in life for you than—you know you said—hanging about banks and——”

Her partner in crime was getting in the vehicle. He paused with his hand upon its side, and stood looking up at her, his mouth twitching humorously under the mustache which marked a difference from most of the men of her circle.

“You want me to leave thieving to members of society, and earn an honest living?” he suggested.

Violet’s face flamed.

“I—I want to help you. You are strong. You could do what I despair of. I thought, perhaps, this might be a turning point for you—as I promise myself it shall be for me.”

Five minutes ago she had promised herself nothing of the sort; but the urgent need to help another from a path now horrifying to her brought with it the resolve.

The man seated himself and took up the lever with a slight lifting of his well-cut chin.

“I must call your attention to the fact that my contact with the upper circles, as represented by yourself, has not been of a nature to elevate me. I’ll think about what you say. My remembrance is that the earlier crimes are usually accompanied by resolutions of reform. When you get where I am, you’ll drop that nonsense, make the best haul you can, and count failure all in the day’s work.”

He spoke with a quiet practicality which denied her further utterance. In the light of his reply, her appeal to him seemed crude and childish. For some inexplicable reason, the outcome of the matter overwhelmed her with despair. When they came to the avenue which led straight away to the Roache-Dunnings’, the man explained one or two points about the machine, lifted his hat, and was surprised to receive no reply to his adieux. Violet had pulled her great veil down, and was quietly weeping behind it, trying hard not to let the suppressed sobs shake her shoulders.

An inquiring glance toward her averted face evidently left him with the impression that she was angry, and glad thus to be rid of him.

But she watched through tears the tall, elegant figure swinging down the sidewalk, dominating all about it with a look of careless power, then took up her progress toward home; a progress singularly free from accident, seeing how unreliable the machine had been under his more competent hands.

## VI.

THE next day Mrs. Roache-Dunning had on hand a visit to the horse show, in the course of which Delancey Rensselaer was to bring the Californian to their box. Her amazement was only equalled by her rage when Violet announced brusquely, without explanation or apology, that she could not be of the party. She said she was going down town on some very important business.

"Well," said Bellona Dunning, "if meeting the man from California isn't the most important business in life to you at the present moment, I should like to be informed what is."

Violet sat stirring her coffee with a steady hand, but with a very pale face. She made no proffer of the desired information.

"Let the girl alone," growled Gabriel Dunning from behind his paper, a refuge he always sought when his wife's tones began to mount in the octave.

"I'm sorry to disappoint you," said Violet, replying to his kindness rather than his wife's insistence; "but I really must go."

"Well, you can go on the street-car, then," snapped Mrs. Dunning, rising in rage. "We'll take the big machine, and the little one's out of order. James has been told that the horses will not be used to-day, and I shall not countermand that order to further this madness of yours. I should feel as though I were abetting you in a crime;" and she made an exit from the room which might have been called tragic had the provocation been more adequate.

"Never mind Bel," Bel's husband said, dropping his paper into his lap and looking kindly at the girl. "She talks a good deal, but her performance doesn't amount to much."

"I don't mind, thank you, Mr. Dunning. I'm distressed about something else."

She turned suddenly to the white-haired, prosperous old fellow, sitting in his own elegant breakfast-room, at his own sumptuously appointed table, "Tell me, please," she asked abruptly, "if you had done something very wrong, wouldn't you think that the most important thing in life was to retrace your steps?"

Gabriel Dunning smiled at her eager, beautiful young face. "The hint is that you've done something very wrong," he said, "and the answer is that I don't believe it. You girls that are brought up in convents get some high-strung ideas that won't work when you come out into real life. If nobody's eating you about what you've done, best let it alone. That's my advice."

The girl drew her delicate brows above eyes bright with pain. She shook her head. "It isn't a trifle, as you think; it's a—it's a crime. It's a crime that the law recognizes as such."

The old man looked at her anxiously. "The ethics of the Street are against going outside the law," he said thoughtfully. "If I can do a fellow up and stay inside the law, I do it. What I can get, and not be arrested for getting, is mine. But when you cross that line you go into danger—and you've no right to take risks in this world. Anyhow, a sure thing is the only proposition you should tackle when you begin to go on doubtful ground."

Violet arose, sighing. "Thank you so much." This man's standard, the standard of the Street, brought no light or comfort to her groping mind.

"You still think you'll go down town? You can't go to the horse show?" asked her host, looking at her keenly.

The kindness in his tone urged her to try again. "But, Mr. Dunning, if you felt you were injuring others—another—by what you had done——" she recommenced, leaning towards him, her soul in her eyes.

"Let the other fellow look out for himself. I'll stand that doctrine when it comes my turn," said the old man briskly. "You can't take care of the whole world, Violet."

"I don't mean the person who might lose where one gained dishonestly—dishonorably. If one were a thief, say—I don't mean the person they stole from. What I am trying to think of is the example, the effect upon others, who might be led to better things if one were good, and who might be pushed down to destruction because my—because one's standards were not high."

"Little girl," said the gray-haired financier, rising and laying a kindly hand upon her shoulder, "if you've won too much at bridge, don't worry. The foolish woman whose money you got may learn a lesson by losing it. If it hurts your tender conscience, quit playing bridge (I'm guessing, you see), or play only with people who are able to lose. But mind you don't go beyond bridge. I know two or three men who have monthly bills to pay because their wives will pick up things in stores. That's illegal. I guess the judiciary of this country can make a morality that's good enough for Americans—and they don't say anything about setting examples. Don't bother your pretty head about such matters. You'll be only too good for some lucky man who gets you."

And the old fellow who had made a great success of his legal morality went out and left the girl standing with bent head at the table.

There are spirits which are docile and accept without much question the codes presented to them—forced upon them. There are others which must prove and choose for themselves; and to this latter class Violet belonged. That Mr. Dunning would have con-

doned her crime, that her father applauded it, that both crimes were committed against women of her circle, whose lax ideals would have found her performance amusing except that the offence was personally against them, these things left her only the more determined to tread her own path and follow out her own instincts.

Her plans were vague. She meant to go down town and see whether it would be possible secretly to return the remainder of the money to Mrs. Penderly. That was as far as she had got at present. Later she might scrape together the amount that she had used, and send it by the same channel—whatever that was—to the woman from whom she had stolen it. This resolution brought comfort, and it was with a certain buoyancy that she stepped into an elevated car, to make her first essay toward the right course.

The seats were full, except one in the middle cross section. The man who occupied half of it rose to offer the window. He lifted his hat, bowing gravely—and she recognized the Thief!

"Should you prefer that I do not sit beside you?" he asked, as she sank into her seat with a murmur of thanks.

She shook her head. How was she to know that he had ridden that route a dozen times in the last two days on the hazard of seeing her?

"The providence which we miscall chance seems to be unwilling to let you drop your disreputable acquaintance," the deep voice said quietly close to her ear, as she tried to collect herself and make some opening of the subject which engrossed her mind.

"If you are ashamed of being a thief," she returned, as low, with not quite the personal application which he found in the words, "it's the first step towards not being one."

Poor child, she announced this discovery almost with enthusiasm. The ancient truth is taught most children at a mother's knee, where repentance for childish faults paves the way for moral delicacy in later years.

"I am not in the least ashamed of my calling," announced her neighbor promptly. "Nature is the greatest old thief of us all. If she sets a bad example which her offspring are constantly following, I can't help it. You can't help it either," he added as a further thought, giving her a swift, amused glance. "A beautiful woman is an immense power in the world, but whether for good or ill might be open to question."

The blunt compliment brought some color to Violet's cheek.

"I was sorry after you left me yesterday," she began hesitatingly. "I felt responsible, in a manner. Some things you said—well, you and I are partners in a crime. I suppose I suffered from an unexpressed desire to have you share my repentance."

"Never repent unless you are making a failure of it," counselled the man in a tone of curious bitterness.

"I repent most when I seem most successful," announced Violet. "I don't know why that should be, but it is."

"You can't rouse any remorse in me," said the big man, squaring his shoulders and settling himself comfortably in his seat.

"Did you have a good mother?" the girl asked abruptly.

The red rose under the tan on the man's cheek. His nostrils flickered, and he turned on his companion a pair of eyes which made her say hastily:

"Oh, I understand that you were born and brought up a gentleman. Please forgive me. I have had no mother, and it always seems to me that some things may be excused on that score. There is so much she would have taught me if she had lived."

The Thief's face softened beautifully; it set Violet to remembering that first look of impersonal kindness which he had given to her in the bank.

"Yes, yes," he agreed. "You are right. I was a motherless boy; but that's not the explanation of my"—he bit his lip, glanced at her with a half smile, and concluded—"my choice of profession."

Violet, hopelessly seeking reason for a man of this type being found in the ranks of the offenders, shook her head.

"It wasn't," he asserted. "I was brought up by an aunt—the dearest and best of women, a gallant soul who bore a man's burdens on her slim shoulders, and certainly never expected that I would fail her in one particular as I have done."

"Give it up, then. Go back to an honest life—you must have been honest once—you never could look as you do if you'd been born for a thief," urged the girl in a low tone.

The man laughed frankly.

"You must excuse me," he said, as he noted the earnestness of her face. "I suppose I'm an ungrateful dog, but I really can't help finding your attitude intensely amusing. No doubt your precept and practice are no further apart than those of most reformers; but, really——" and he laughed again.

Courage Violet Rensselaer had, and a grand persistence. It irked her to feel the helplessness of her position, but it also spurred her forward.

"Don't take me into consideration," she said quietly. "I have not asked you to consider my example. It would be a sorry one if I did. That I mean to make it better is neither here nor there to you. I'm not doing so for your sake, but for my own. If I should ever meet you after I have straightened up my own affairs and cleared my own slate—why, we will talk of that then. Now——"



The man had turned and regarded her for some time intently.

"It does concern me—more than you guess," he broke in. "What are you planning to do?"

"Never mind me," said Violet impatiently. "I want you to come back to the point in which you failed to follow your aunt's teachings. You know you said——"

"Oh, that!"

For a long time there was silence between them. They were getting down into town, and the car began to empty, leaving the two almost alone in their part of it, when the Thief drew a wallet from his pocket, opened it, and laid in Violet's hand the small photograph of a young girl.

"I'll have to tell you about her before I can make you understand the thing which is troubling me," he said briefly.

Violet dropped the card into her lap with a faint cry. It was a portrait of Octavia Randolph!

"I feel to blame about this business," the man began. "I should have acted differently—and now I'm afraid it's too late."

Violet turned and looked at him. Here was the man who had persecuted and made love to her poor little seamstress! The fact that he was a criminal was no doubt the "thing" which Octavia found out, and which made his proffers of love an insult.

"Don't say any more," she cautioned him. "I know this girl. It's Octavia Randolph, isn't it?"

"Yes, Octavia Randolph. You do? You know her? Then you can tell me where she is. She's disappeared, so far as I am concerned. I couldn't get any track of her. You'll give me her address? I knew you were to bring me luck, the first time I looked at you. It was not for nothing that my heart warmed so to you."

"No," returned Violet dryly. "It was not for nothing. It made you put a bundle of stolen money into my hands."

Somehow her charity for Octavia Randolph's disreputable lover was not so wide-winged as that which she had stretched out to cover the thief who was her own accomplice in crime.

"The address—please give me the address," he urged.

Violet debated. She and Octavia had decided that, with a view to getting rid of the undesirable lover, the seamstress should leave her lodgings without giving any clue to her destination. Yet when she would have parted her lips to tell him this and urge upon him the honorable course towards Octavia, no words came.

"I don't think I can do that," she said, and turned to the window, giving the man beside her the benefit of a profile like a classic cameo and a bit of cloth-clad shoulder to study.

"Why? Oh, because I'm a thief? Well, what are——"

"What am I? you were going to ask." She turned on him with flashing eyes.

"I was not—I swear it!" he protested in dismay. "I was going to say, 'what are most people?'"

"You would have had a perfect right to speak so to me. You need not spare my feelings," the girl said drearily. "But, at least, Octavia Randolph isn't a thief. I'll not be instrumental in sending you to her—not while you talk as you do about it."

The guard flung open the door, as the train halted, and called out a station; it was evidently the one at which the man desired to get off. He rose.

"The address, Miss Rensselaer. Beg pardon; you see I know your name. Surely you will not deny me the address. I want to make up to Octavia for——"

Violet had risen also. "I'll see about it," she said coldly, as she pressed past him and started on down the aisle. She might as well get off here as anywhere. Her plans were of the vaguest.

"You'll see about it!" echoed the man in an irritated tone, following her off the car and down the long flight of steps. "When am I to know? Surely you don't want me hanging around the house—and you have no name or address, to write to me. Is this just your way of saying no?"

As she made no reply, he looked keenly at her, then said:

"I guess I shall have to tell you—here and now—why I have a right to that address—what Octavia is to me——"

"You needn't," she broke in; "I know."

There was silence. She became suddenly aware of her companion's short, agitated breathing. She looked around at him in astonishment. He had confessed his criminal life with cynical calm; he had seemed so arrogantly unmoved, while she suffered, that his first words came now with an added shock of surprise.

"You knew!" he repeated; then again, "You knew all the time!" Resentment mingled with the last words and tintured their distress.

She nodded. "As soon as you showed me Octavia's picture," she murmured. "She had told me—told me—about you."

He looked perplexed. "Of course she might, if you were intimate enough. But how did you—— Come, there has been enough deception and make-believe between you and me. I am ashamed of my part in it. I was never moved by so real and compelling an emotion toward any human being as toward you. From the first moment I saw you, I——"

"Hush!" said the girl gently. A sudden flash had matured Violet's plans in her unconscious mind. Her moral code was com-

plete; but it was the transmuting power of a higher feeling, not the shuddering chill of fear, which had set it in its shape. Her spirit was mounting to those heights where it could take the cosmic view that made the soul of another woman's lover—a thief—as dear to her as that of a man who, she now admitted to herself, had dominated her fancy since first they looked into each other's eyes.

He who stepped quietly by her side was more to her in that moment than any creature had ever been, since he was the first who seemed to need her help. For the sake of his soul, she must save her own. To be able to appeal to him with clean hands, and plead that he turn his strength from base uses to higher, she must go through a penance of which even she scarcely guessed the depth.

"Listen," she said to him. "You will walk with me to the next corner. There you will turn to your right, and leave me. I am going to Mrs. Penderly's. She is the woman you saw drop the money you put into my hands. I am going to tell her all about it. I shall return the hundred dollars that I have left, and pay the rest as fast as I can. I thought of sending it to her anonymously—but that is not enough. I am going to do the honest thing, and I am not going to be afraid to do it openly."

"You don't understand," began her companion hurriedly. "You must do nothing till I have told you. You have no right."

"Hush. Wait. I do understand," persisted the girl. "I'll only tell Mrs. Penderly what applies to me. Your part of it I shall not mention. I have no right to. But when I have done this, I shall feel that I can talk to you. The dinner for which I stole the dress occurs at Mrs. Roache-Dunning's house to-morrow night. The Penderlys will be there. If I fail to see Mrs. Penderly this morning—as I probably shall—I shall tell her the story to-morrow night. After that I will give you Octavia's address, if you will make me a certain promise which I shall then feel ready to exact from you."

"Yes—I know—I'll be there," he began vehemently. Then he protested: "But you mustn't—I can't let you."

"You can't let me! We are almost to the corner now. You know my name and where I'm to be found. I have told you exactly what I will do, and if you were better acquainted with me, you would not speak of letting me do it."

The man halted suddenly in the midst of the stream of pedestrians; they were on Broadway. "This is awful," he said, looking down at his companion. "Good heaven! Miss Rensselaer—how can I—how—I can't let you go to that woman's house and say such things of yourself! I should feel responsible——"

"You are not responsible," interrupted Violet quickly. "It

makes no difference that you put the money into my hands. I had hidden it and meant to steal it. I can face the consequences of my own acts."

"You shan't go," said the Thief, squaring that firm jaw of his desperately. "I won't let you. Listen——"

What he would have said was lost, for Violet turned to greet a man who overtook them and looked at them curiously.

"Good morning, Mr. Penderly," she said in even tones. "Is Mrs. Penderly at home? I have an errand with her this morning."

"I believe she is," said the newcomer, falling into step beside them.

Again and again he glanced across at the tall figure beyond the girl. Had Violet been minded to introduce them, she had no name wherewith the Thief might be designated.

"You are not going home, of course?" she said to her old-time lover. "I shall get you to find me a cab, then."

She turned sharply to the big man. "Till Thursday night," she said significantly, putting out her hand.

Even then he struggled. "Excuse me—you mustn't—I beg pardon, but——" he said brokenly.

"Till Thursday night," she repeated firmly, glad to get away from the protest in his eyes, and some emotion which she read there stronger and more compelling, which set her own heart beating fast in answer to it. Was she, Violet Rensselaer, to be so moved by poor Octavia Randolph's lover—and a thief!

## VII.

As foolish little Mrs. Penderly fluttered into the room, dragging yards of silk and lace and ribbon after her, settling innumerable tinkling bangles upon her slim wrists, even she was struck by a certain exaltation in the bearing of her visitor.

"You remember the check you dropped at the bank window the other day," began Violet hurriedly, as soon as she had said good-morning.

"But I didn't—I didn't drop any check. The bank man said I did, or, rather, he insisted in that thin-nosed way of his—why do men in banks all have thin noses?—that I only gave him nine checks. But I will never believe that I did not give him ten checks."

"Yes. Anyhow you dropped something—for I picked it up and kept it."

"How absurd!" exclaimed the little woman, leaning forward in her chair and setting her ribbons aflutter. "How perfectly, deliciously, delightfully absurd!"

"It looked like a check, and I had heard you say that you had a number of them made out and endorsed, and I tried——"

"I did. I endorsed fourteen or fifteen before I left the house," Blake Penderly's wife broke in. "I will not use those bank pens. They splutter. They throw drops of ink on your gloves till it looks as though they were polka-dotted. It's just like the bank men having thin noses—the bank pens all splutter, and nobody knows why."

"I thought it was a check endorsed so that anybody who found it could cash it," resumed Violet patiently. "So I put my foot over it——"

"And then found that it wasn't a check at all," giggled little Mrs. Penderly. "How absurd!"

"It was something much better worth stealing than a check. It was your roll of five hundred-dollar bills," said Violet quietly.

Mrs. Penderly burst out laughing, and laughed so long that Violet feared she was growing hysterical.

"Oh, it's too absurd!" she gasped, when she finally got her voice after two or three trials.

The girl rose, white and shaking.

"It may be absurd to you," she said; "but this is a serious matter to me, Mrs. Penderly."

"Oh, serious!" and again the little woman went off into hysterical giggles. "Forgive me, Violet—you lovely thing!—but it's too absurd; you coming here with your high-tragedy airs, and insisting that you picked up a roll of money which I certainly never dropped."

"I saw you drop it," said the girl in an even, monotonous voice.

"Really, now," remonstrated Mrs. Penderly, "I may be a fool—of course I am one; my husband says so, and he ought to know—but really, dear girl, I'm not quite such a fool as to lose that amount of money and never miss it. No, no, no. You're having some sort of joke on me—what is it?"

So far Violet's courage had been a thing to admire; now a sudden chill struck athwart her glowing mood.

"I certainly saw you drop a folded pink paper in the bank the other day," she said doggedly. "I put my foot over it and—picked it up. It was a roll containing five hundred dollars in currency, with the pink paper wrapped around it."

The two women faced each other in the middle of the grand parlor. Little Mrs. Penderly backed off from her exciting visitor with a small affected scream.

"When you put on that severe, mysterious air, I'm afraid of you," she said in a foolish voice.



It seemed over-strained—almost ridiculous—to force a confession upon this vacuous creature. But here Violet's persistence made itself felt.

"I took that money, and bought a dinner frock with half of it," she said. "You will see me wearing it to-morrow night. One hundred and fifty I used to relieve the distress of a sewing girl whom I know. And here is the hundred which is left. I will pay you the rest as soon as I can get it."

Again Mrs. Penderly backed away, this time with a little hop, as though the bill presented to her notice had been a mouse.

"You dear, absurd creature!" she said. "Don't I tell you that it isn't my money you've been buying frocks with and helping sick seamstresses with? Really, dear girl, we used to say, when I was a child, that finders should be keepers. I don't see why it isn't your money."

Violet sank back into her chair.

"That's better," cooed her hostess, seating herself also. "Do sit down, and we'll talk about this deliciously absurd business all morning. Maybe I shall convince you that the money was some you had put in your 'other pocket.'"

Violet sat regarding her boot-toes moodily. The one weak link in her chain of evidence was that she had not herself picked up the roll of bills; it had been secured and handed to her by the Thief.

"Now, Violet," began little Mrs. Penderly, with unexpected good sense, "how do you know that the paper you saw fall was the roll you picked up? Did it flutter—flutter—flutter down? Or did it come plunk?"

"It fluttered down," admitted Violet, in a low tone.

"How absurd! There—I knew it was not a roll of bills. What you saw fall was the blank check that I pushed off the ledge as I was talking. I remember it perfectly. Blake tells me a dozen times a day that I have no sense; but I certainly have a little memory, and I remember that."

Violet was struggling with the problem of whether the Thief deliberately substituted the roll of bills for the check which her foot had covered, or whether the roll was lying there and she inadvertently took possession of it instead of the fallen check. She wanted to be alone to think it out.

"Try to remember," Mrs. Penderly's tinkling tones went on; "didn't you have that amount of money about you somewhere, and just happen to get your hands on it at the time you picked up the fallen check?"

Violet laughed mirthlessly.

"If I had had anything in my pockets," she said absently, "I should have given it to Octavia Randolph when she fainted trying on my frock, and I talked to her afterward."

She spoke more to herself than to the woman before her; her troubled gaze was fixed upon the glove she was drawing on; she scarcely noted the long silence which followed. Upon it there broke, in a shrill little whisper, an echo of her own words:

"Octavia Randolph! What do you know of her?"

Violet was uncomfortably aware of having been careless with the name and secret of another.

"Nothing," she said hastily. "The words slipped out accidentally. She is the girl who fitted my frock at Madame Hague's."

"What do you know of her? What has she told you?" urged Mrs. Penderly feverishly, leaning forward and catching Violet by the wrist, searching her countenance with near-sighted, distressed blue eyes. "That girl has told you something about me—and—Mr. Penderly—hasn't she?"

"Certainly not. She never mentioned your name to me," returned Violet quickly. Then, seeing that the truth about the matter might be better for Octavia than something—she knew not what—that Mrs. Penderly suspected, she went on seriously:

"The girl was in great distress. Somebody was threatening to have her turned out of her rooms, and she thought if this person came to Madame Hague she would lose her place. The unwelcome attentions of a man who had no right to address her had worried and fairly terrified her till she was nearly sick. She fainted while she was fitting my dress, and so I happened to hear all this. A hundred and fifty dollars of the money went to relieve her, you know."

For a long moment Mrs. Penderly stood shaking from head to foot, grasping Violet's wrist with rigid fingers whose chill the girl felt even through her glove, staring at her visitor with parted lips. Then she dropped suddenly in the chair which she had just vacated, covered her face with her hands, and burst into tears.

"I am a horrid little beast!" she sobbed. "Go away and leave me! I do think I have more trouble than anybody."

"Mrs. Penderly—Mrs. Penderly!" exclaimed Violet in consternation. "What was it I said that hurt your feelings? I'm awfully sorry. If you'll tell me what I said, perhaps I can explain it."

"It wasn't what you sa—said; it was what you did. Or, rather, it was what I did," sobbed Blake Penderly's wife, still with her face hidden.

Some wild idea crossed Violet's mind that Adela Penderly was stricken with sudden remorse for the part she had played in the

days when Blake Penderly jilted her visitor. The story went, and it was probably true, that she had fallen desperately in love with Penderly, and had practically offered herself and her millions to him, well knowing that he was soon to be married to penniless Violet Rensselaer.

"I do think I have the *hardest* time!" the little woman breathed, wiping first one eye and then the other and composing her face for conversation. "Blake doesn't care a thing in the world about me—he never did. Oh, never mind saying that you don't believe so, and you hope I am mistaken, and all that. We won't take time to scallop the edges of our speeches this morning—we'll just make 'em plain."

Violet, brought to a sudden halt in the midst of some such platitudes as her hostess had mentioned, felt her color rising, and, in spite of a very real sympathy, she had a sudden desire to laugh.

"I'm sorry," she said simply.

"It's more than I should be in your place," said Mrs. Penderly, with one of her sudden pounces at the truth, which were so disconcerting to one used to the wide, smooth curves by which social conversation skirts unpleasant fact. "If I were in your place, I should be tickled to death to see me tearing my hair in misery this way. But you're a queer girl; you've come here to tell me about picking up a roll of money that was anybody's who happened to find it, just on the bare supposition that it was mine. Maybe your queerness goes far enough to make you sorry for me. I need it. Blake never really cared sixpence for anybody but you. He throws it up to me whenever we quarrel—and that's pretty much whenever we meet—but he keeps me jealous about other people. I—I have a friend who wrote and told me to watch him and this Randolph person."

"Oh!" cried Violet suddenly. "Not that! Not Blake Penderly! He wasn't—it wasn't he who——"

Mrs. Penderly settled the bangles on her wrists with a great clinking and jingling.

"I may as well tell the truth while I am about it," she said more composedly. "I have an order in with a private detective agency. There—you despise me—I know it—I'd despise you for the same thing. But jealousy will bring any of us to it. It was my detective who told me about Octavia Randolph. Blake cuts up so awfully when I try to make him behave, that I was afraid to mention it to him; but I went to the girl and told her a few things. I suppose I did my part toward making her faint while she was fitting you. I suppose I look an awfully poor figure in this business;

but so would anybody that had been dragged around at Blake Penderly's heels for a year, as I have."

Violet was struggling with the knowledge that Blake Penderly, and not the Thief, was Octavia Randolph's undesirable, dishonorable lover. What, then, had been the cause of her new acquaintance's interest in the girl? Preoccupied with these anxieties, she rose to take her departure.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Penderly," she said absently. "It seems that I have made a mistake. The money was not yours. I must attempt to find whose it was, for I can't contemplate failing to return it to its proper owner."

Mrs. Penderly rose with a little strangled shriek and flung her arms around her departing visitor's neck. "I can't bear it! I can't bear it!" she cried. "Don't look at me like that. You're a saint, Violet. Anybody but you would have been glad to pocket that money, and gladder because it belonged to miserable me. You don't know the wrongs I've done you."

"Don't tell me, then," counselled the girl kindly. "You did me a great kindness once. I ought to be grateful for it the longest day I live—and I am."

She kissed the tear-wet cheek, where the bit of rouge which Mrs. Penderly thought sufficient for demi-toilette was sadly radled and streaked by the drops of woe.

"You never need fear anything from Octavia Randolph," she added. "I—I think she is going to be married very soon. As for your husband, he doesn't half appreciate the wife he's got, but he will more as—as time goes on—as he knows you better."

"I did you a great favor! Oh! I did you a great favor. I know what you mean—you mean when I married Blake Penderly! Well"—with a mirthless little giggle and a swift dabbing of the eyes with her pocket handkerchief—"it's an ill wind that blows nobody good. Good-by, Violet. So charmed to have had you here this morning. Haven't I been absurd! More absurd than usual—and that's quite unnecessary. Good-by, dear girl. I'll see you at the Roache-Dunnings' to-morrow night. You'll be wearing the new frock; and you and I will be like two nice iced cakes, that look all white and sleek over the top, and you couldn't guess for the life of you what's inside."

Violet kissed her hostess again, remarking with a sudden smile:

"I shall at least know that there's plenty of sweetness under your icing—and funny little spices that I never imagined were there!"

## VIII.

IN spite of the fact that her discovery of Blake Penderly's unseemly pursuit of the young sewing girl left the Thief with a cleaner record in Violet's eyes, it had its share toward depressing her. At times she fancied that her curious new friend had not spoken of the Virginia girl as a lover would. And then she told herself that no girl—certainly none situated as Octavia Randolph was—could have resisted the Thief—merely because he was a thief.

Yet as the hour approached when she should see him again her heart steadily mounted, till it was a starry-eyed, rosy-cheeked face which smiled back from her mirror when she donned the dinner gown. Every last instruction for the "mystery dinner" had been given to caterer, butler, and the latter's well-nigh exhausted staff of assistants. Mrs. Roache-Dunning was triumphant over the caterer, who had made a dozen difficulties about providing the ices in miniature spun-sugar cottages with lighted windows, and other courses which carried each its tiny battery of electric lights.

Violet settled the soft folds about her with the comforting reflection that a friend's money had paid for them. She never doubted for a moment now but that the Thief had substituted a roll of his own funds for the fallen check. He must have done so with only kind intent, for he could not have expected to see her again. He must have felt for her the same attraction and trust which she had unwillingly given to him from the first instant that her eyes encountered the kind, almost pitying gaze—indeed, he had said it.

That he was a thief, and that the five hundred dollars was probably stolen money, seemed now a small matter to the girl. He was young and strong, of a powerful, dominating nature; she would so urge upon him the better course, she would set him so brave an example therein, that he must see the beauty of honesty. But, after all, it was not reason that set her heart singing and clapping its hands as she billowed down the great stair in her evening splendor. The Thief—her thief—was not Octavia Randolph's lover; she was sure, to the core of her being, that he would be no woman's lover but hers. An hour or two would bring her speech with him. She put reason away, and revelled in the happy, happy anticipation of meeting once more those strong, kind eyes, and of this time having something to offer which would compel commendation as well as mere admiration from him. Let the foolish dinner run its course. She would say what came into her head to this Californian, with his millions. After, *he* was coming!

The great dining-room was darkened; upon the table a big



central plateau of red roses, emblems of silence and mystery, held each a tiny scarlet globe of electric fire in its heart; but till Mrs. Roache-Dunning should press the button which controlled this light, even they lay a black mass on a dimly discerned white plain. The ladies were marshalled into the east parlor, the men were gathered in the west. They filed one by one into the darkened room, and found their places at the board with the assistance of the butler, his helpers, and place cards formed of small transparencies imitating such as are carried in political processions.

"Politics remain the greatest of mysteries—to women, anyhow," observed Mrs. Roache-Dunning, when they were all seating themselves; "and we began with transparencies that remind one of elections and dark horses."

Violet was aware of a tall man at her left, where the place card showed the name Page Carter, the Californian, by all that was right and proper her allotted prey.

"I'm glad of the darkness," he began in a low voice. "It's unusual, but most welcome. Did you get my note—my letter, rather? I wrote you a somewhat bulky one before I dared come—here—to meet you to-night."

Violet sat drenched, dumb, with amazement, stone cold with terror, and making no reply, while the butler and his assistants placed the first course, green turtle soup, with tiny light-houses, beside each plate.

Finally, "Your note!" she echoed faintly, just above a whisper, as she took up her spoon. "Your note!" Her utterance sank to the merest breath. "Who—are—you?"

"I see you didn't," said the troubled voice of her neighbor. "Yes, indeed—a charming idea"—in reply to Mrs. Roache-Dunning, who had asked him for an expert's opinion as to the toy light-houses, which showed a revolving gleam of alternate red and white.

There was a general murmur of admiration when the hostess suddenly illuminated her roses. She and Violet, in planning the affair, had taken advantage of the fact that red light does not carry far; and only a soft glow like the coals of a hearth-fire wavered above the snowy damask, the cut-glass and silver.

Yet it was light enough that Violet dared not look at her neighbor: the Thief, she had called him; the Californian, the great, great catch, the possessor of so many millions, as she knew him now. She turned to the man at her right hand, one of those harmless, innocuous persons who fill out tables for dinner-giving hostesses, and addressed to him some commonplace remark concerning the decoration. When she had continued this conversation as long as possible, she found Carter waiting for her.

"This isn't the place to beg you to forgive me," his deep voice murmured, under cover of the hum of conversation about them. "You don't know what I suffered when you walked away with Blake Penderly yesterday. I rushed into a drug-store and hunted up the address, but I got the wrong one. When I finally found the house, I hung around for an hour or two waiting for you to come out; but I suppose you had already gone. It was then that I wrote you—it's strange you didn't get the letter."

Violet remembered a pile of mail, and on the top of it a square white envelope addressed in an unfamiliar masculine hand. She had been too busy to look over the letters, and too sure that the interests of her life lay outside of them.

"You won't say a word to me. You won't even look at me," said Carter, and the deep voice vibrated. He could not know—he could not guess—the dismay, the consternation, which paralyzed her tongue when she would have spoken to him.

"Violet," called little Mrs. Penderly across the table, "you look just like a priestess at an altar, or a young martyr at the stake, or anything else beautiful and grand and unusual, with that red light wavering about over you. Doesn't she, Blake? I believe you invented it for the purpose. I'm sure the red spots are making me look like a child just breaking out with measles. Mrs. Dunning resembles the——"

"Witches in Macbeth," put in that lady, with an easy laugh. "Don't spare my blushes—they come cheap this evening; the red light supplies them without any exertion on one's part."

The servants were now bringing in the wine to accompany the course. A one-cell battery occupied the foot of the wine glass, a tiny bulb of light burned in the hollow stem, turning the ruby liquid to a fiery eye.

"Look not upon the wine when it is red," quoted the host, as he lifted his glass and squinted through it.

"Don't look at it; just drink it," amended Delancey Rensselaer, from the foot of the table. "That electricity makes your port look great."

"They have a system of ripening wines and brandies by electricity now," suggested a man across the table. "Perhaps, while Mrs. Roache-Dunning is delighting our eyes with this exhibition, she is also preparing something to tickle our palates."

"Mrs. Dunning, Mrs. Dunning," complained the clown of the company—there always is one at a dinner—"I don't like this dark-lantern business. I think you should call this a thieving dinner rather than a mystery repast. Miss Belton has stolen my napkin under cover of the darkness, and is refusing to return it."

"I didn't," protested the débutante beside the complainant. "That was my handkerchief—and it isn't so dark but that I could see you steal it in the first place."

"'Turn on the light;' Jerome's motto's good enough for me." The clown laughed slyly, for, as his ilk always do, he loved to get in a covert dig at the weaknesses of those about him, and the Tammany men at the table were in the majority.

Thus prodded, "There is a great deal of nonsense going about in this day under the name of honest reform," began Gabriel Dunning ponderously. "When people can keep within the law, and administer the city in such a way as to—as to keep within the law, I think the stirring up of some petty maladministration, which of course may have existed, is bad public policy."

"Oh, for goodness' sake, don't let's talk politics!" objected the hostess, as the fish course came in, shining with tiny beads of light from long bridges swinging across the platters which contained it. "If we are thieves, let's steal comfortably, and not try to cloak it with big words."

"The question is," put in Delancey Rensselaer suavely, "what is honesty?" He paused and looked about him in the flicker of light.

As Mrs. Dunning had hoped, the women were at their best in the rosy, broken, half shine. Even the men in their disfiguring evening dress were almost handsome. Delancey Rensselaer's white head and fine dark eyes made a picture as he rolled out the code of his hour and his kind:

"The honesty of to-day may be the dishonesty of to-morrow. We are beginning to find that robbing oneself is as reprehensible as robbing another. The cry of reform covers a great deal of egotism and self-righteousness. The question is, who will give us a broad enough standard to be fairly national?"

Even in the darkness, Violet blushed for her father. She preferred Mrs. Dunning's frank, tiger tactics. Her heart gave a little leap as the man at her side began to speak.

"It seems to me," said the Californian dryly, "that personal standards are all that ever could be. The lax morality of the public at the present day is rooted in loose dealing between members of the same social circle. We condone among our friends and acquaintances what the law cannot reach, and in so condoning we lose our standard. If a man likes being absolutely honest himself, the next step is to like absolutely honest men for his friends."

As Carter ceased speaking, rather uncomfortably conscious that he was holding the attention of the entire table, and that with sentiments quite hostile to their own, his eyes fell upon Violet

Rensselaer's hand where it lay upon the damask beside her plate. It was a slender member, white and soft and useless, utterly unfitted to grapple its share of the world's work; and just now it trembled exceedingly. From it his startled, penitent gaze rose to her face. Even in the red light she was pale, and her drooping lids seemed lowered over tears. Yet—and the man noted it with a sudden swell of pride in her—nothing could subdue the haughty courage with which her young head was carried. The words he had just uttered so unthinkingly danced before the eye of his memory printed in fiery lines. How crude, how indefensibly stupid, how brutal, he had been!

He sought for words of apology or explanation; they were not. Could he state that he made an exception of her? Could he suggest that he admired her although she was a thief?

In the blinding pain of her discovery, Violet realized fully, for the first time, how happy she had permitted herself to be. She saw now that her feeling was—haughty soul, even in her concessions—that she could afford a light heart, since she had paid for her bliss by accepting and promising to make right the problem of a lover who was a thief. So soon as she found that Blake Penderly was Octavia's pursuer, she knew that the Thief loved her, and admitted that his love was returned.

She sat with lowered eyes, telling over the beads in her rosary of shame. Hers was a royal nature which loved the attitude of giver. Part of Carter's powerful attraction for her had been that she conceived he needed her help. Now, with this discovery, she felt that her gifts were flung back in her face; and that face stung and reddened as though actually smitten. She had been made the poor fool of a rich, successful man's comedy. He had pitied her, but he had despised her lax standards of honesty, and secretly laughed at her later heroics. He was not a thief—then he was, in all probability, the Virginia girl's honest suitor; her mind ran hastily over what he had said concerning Octavia, and settled finally on this as the legitimate explanation.

Suddenly the pride of race which ran so strong in her warned her that she had been too long silent. With a desperate rallying of her forces, she turned a fairly composed countenance to Carter and addressed to him a question about California, in a manner so free from embarrassment that, for the moment, it quieted his perturbation.

The dinner lightened toward its close; the ices came in, served in tiny snowy mounds which contained candied fruits and nuts, and were crowned by the small spun-sugar cottages with glowing windows that had caused the caterer so many groans.

As Violet dug at hers with her fork, she was humorously reminded of Adela Penderly's simile of the two iced cakes. It was light enough for her to see that lady's face, across the table and somewhat further down the board. Mrs. Penderly was in pale blue, with rather more fluttering ends than usual. Some electric sympathy warned her of Violet's glance, and she met it with one equally laughing.

"I've found a big red candied cherry in mine, like a bleeding heart on a valentine," she called down to Violet. "Do you suppose there is anything intentional in it?"

"Thank the Lord that chance took care of you," murmured Carter, "and that you did not abase yourself before that little idiot of a woman."

They were rising now to go into the drawing-room, and as Violet laid her hand upon his arm she said seriously: "But I did—if you mean by abasing myself that I told Mrs. Penderly the truth about the money. I see now that it was yours. I don't mind at all. If I could do a thing like that—I can take the consequences."

"Violet," called Mrs. Roache-Dunning, doing her part as a hostess matchmaker, "I depend on you to show Mr. Carter the view from the terrace. The moon is just coming up. Dorine has a wrap for you. All these other people have been bored to death with it, but he must be enthusiastic."

## IX.

OUT under the stars, with the silver disk of the moon just beginning to push up behind black clouds to the east, the two who had come by such strange and devious ways to this hour of highly conventional companionship paced the length of the big stone terrace once in painful silence. Carter was afraid to begin; upon Violet had fallen a lassitude of indifference. The harp of being had been keyed strongly for her in the past week, and under this last jangling its strings must have relaxed or they must have broken. They had relaxed.

"I—I don't know what to say to you," began the man, pausing at last, his back to the view they had been bidden to enjoy. "I feel like a great brute who has been torturing a child. I—when I finished up that Fourth of July oration of mine in there and turned and saw your face—Violet, can you forgive me? Can you believe that it was not intentional—that I am so far from associating you with any real baseness or dishonesty that it never entered my mind till I looked around at you?"

"It doesn't matter," returned the girl nervelessly. "I have come to know in the last few days that nothing matters, except



doing what is clean and upright and earning one's own self-respect. Think of it—I am twenty-two years old, and I never knew what it was to respect myself till I committed a theft and had the courage to confess and try to make restitution!"

Carter caught her hand and looked eagerly into her face.

"You were not in earnest when you said that you had told Mrs. Penderly about that money!" he urged.

"I was. Why should I mind Mrs. Penderly knowing? I knew it—and my opinion of myself is the only thing which counts. I don't even care for yours. I am not even ashamed that you should know me for a thief, and should say——"

"Don't!" the man half groaned. "I talked like a self-righteous prig. Don't remind me of it. Listen, Violet: I was attracted to you from the first moment I saw your face—and that was long before you saw mine. You were pointed out to me one day by Phil Hasbrouk. I got him to present me to your father, and later to Roache-Dunning, because of you. I was as foolish as a school-boy about you. After I knew I was to meet you here to-night, it seemed an age to wait, and I took to haunting your vicinity and tagging you about in a way that ought to have got me run in by the police. Did you never wonder that we 'met by chance' so frequently?"

"Oh," said the girl, "was that it? I was bewildered, but I never thought of that."

"Money—a great deal of money—is a new thing to me. My people—my ancestors—used to have plenty; but ever since I've been old enough to know anything, we've been as poor as church-mice. Then I became a mining engineer, and went west. I had hard times at first. I'm called 'Lucky Carter' now out there since 'The Silver Star' made its big strike; but I've known what it was to be down to my last dollar, and when I saw your face there in the bank, I knew how it must be with you. I took a mad way, but I wanted to help you."

Violet stood long thinking over this bewildering change in the relative positions of herself and the man before her.

"I'm glad you didn't hint to me that you were a thief—like myself—merely to make a fool of me. You must have done that in pure kindness of heart, to spare me knowledge that my theft had been observed by an honest man. Or did you hope to show me the unbeauty of my own course by claiming that you shared it?"

Carter made a gesture of dissent. "I was merely playing the fool in my own fashion. I couldn't trust that you, who looked the embodiment of any man's dream of purity and perfection, had

your own standards of right and wrong or could find them unaided. I must go judging you and meddling."

"You were quite right, too," said Violet gently. "I should never have been anything but pleased with myself, and delighted to be so clever a thief, had I not come to care that you should be honest. It was because you seemed to despise my counsel that I went to Mrs. Penderly. You had made me feel——"

"Oh, Violet, for me? Do you care——"

"Hush, you were going home to Octavia. Poor child, she needs you," said the girl, a sudden vivid pang cutting through her sluggish calm. "I'll"—she steadied her voice—"I'll give you her address now."

She sought for the tiny pencil and programme, which were for later use, since this was a dinner dance. "What a curious posturing fool you must have thought me to refuse it to you! But, you see, you had—you had——"

"Violet," he interrupted passionately, as he watched her bent head and moving fingers, where she sought to get light from a nearby window sufficient to write down the address—"Violet, you make my heart bleed! I regret, more than I can tell you, my reckless, blundering falsehood. It did not have a bad—an unkind—motive; I was led into it by misunderstanding—underestimating—you. But now you can't think that I rate you with those people in there. You must know—you must understand—that I at least appreciate you—your difference."

"Oh!" she returned half scornfully. "Appreciate me! No, you must not rate me with the social set in which you find me; for they are successes, and I am a failure. You seem to despise their point of view; take care that you do not base your commendation of me upon the fact that I attempted to swim down the stream with the iron pots, and, being only clay, have been beaten to pieces in the race."

"A failure?" echoed Carter. "Yes, you are a failure at this sort of thing." He waved a comprehensive hand. "And why? Because you were born for an honest life, and society has come to be one great bunco game. That first day, when we talked together, you told me—and your dear little pale face haunted me all night afterwards—that you had endeavored to make sale of your youth, your beauty, and your good birth, in the marts of Vanity Fair, and had failed. Reason enough for the failure, dear: an honest heart spoiled the bargain."

The girl looked seriously at him, her wistful countenance shone on by the rising moon.

"You approve me too much," she said finally. "I tried hard

to do exactly what was wanted of me. I don't think my conscience troubled me. Perhaps conscience is a thing which develops when one is older. It doesn't seem to me that I was very much ashamed of the things I did; I wasn't even ashamed of trying to steal money. I ought to have been frightened, but I wasn't. There seems to be no shame or fear in me. It hasn't been a question of being happy or unhappy. The—these visits were to be made, the efforts put forth; and I did my best. But things have—they have changed with me. Now I know I shall be content only when I am earning the right to live—honestly. I have never been so near happy in my life as since I decided to go back to Cousin Homer's, where they really want me, and where I can try to find some honest employment."

She fumbled in the folds of her corsage and drew out the last hundred-dollar note, the note which Mrs. Penderly had rejected.

"The money was yours—I am to repay you," she said softly. "I shall be able to return the rest of it very soon, for I have some things which I am going to sell. I——" She faltered a little; the brave heart lifted the drooping head, and she finished, "I wish you and Octavia every happiness."

"Octavia!" echoed Carter. "Octavia Randolph is my cousin—my poor, brave little aunt's only child. I was brought up in her mother's house like a son."

"Your cousin—the same as a sister to you?" Violet repeated in a dazed tone.

"Yes, yes; she was a child of ten when I left Virginia, but after my aunt's death she should have been my responsibility. I thought I was sending her money when I made the strike at the Silver Star, but after a month and more it all came back to me; she had gone away from Martinsburg and left no address for her mail."

"Oh, poor Octavia—if she had known! She is the little sewing girl I told you of, who fainted when she was fitting this gown on me"—touching the filmy folds of the train which lay over her bare arm. "She was in dreadful trouble."

Carter, checked, wheeled toward her. "It was for her that you used part of that money!" he cried, with sudden comprehension. "Violet, dearest, you shame me. While I, careless brute, have been neglecting those who were my responsibility, and reforming the world at large, playing prig and monitor to one a thousand times better than I, you have been following the dictates of your own noble heart and doing what I left undone. You shame me."

The deep voice trembled, failed utterly. On the silence which followed, the man spoke again, low and hesitatingly:

"Can you believe, dear, that I was fighting a sudden, uncontrollable, overwhelming love—a love which was made to seem not only madly sudden and unfounded, but—but—ill-placed—when I was so harsh, when I seemed so alien, so hostile?"

The low, pleading tones were music in Violet's ear, balm upon her weary, bruised, chidden heart. To the strong face bent above her, deeply set now in anxious, almost sorrowful lines, the eyes filled with eager love and entreaty, she lifted a countenance that made Carter catch his breath, it was so flushed and lit and tremulous with happy love.

His arms went round her; their lips met; then his cheek was laid tenderly against hers, and she whispered:

"I know it—I understand, for it was the same with me——"

"You cared for me—for the man you believed a hardened, petty thief!"

"I loved you all the time. I never did anything but love you from the moment I looked in your eyes, there in the bank. It—this love—was what made life so different a thing that I had to——"

She never got any further. Her ardent lover broke in upon what he suspected as coming self-condemnations with his own swift wooing, eager for the opportunity to "make up to her" for all the pain of the past week. The girl in his arms found it no easier to gainsay or deny him than others had done along his victorious way.

Delancey Rensselaer was remaining for the night with the Roache-Dunnings. Dawn was beginning to make pallid the east when the last carriage rolled away, and he and his host and hostess stood waiting in the great entrance-hall for the girl who had just said farewell to the guest of the evening. She passed them quietly, demurely; her foot was on the first step of the grand marble and wrought-iron stairway when the older woman's impatient voice spoke what neither of the men found a formula for uttering:

"Well?"

Violet turned and looked at them all. She vainly tried to veil the happy light in her eyes. Her lips would shape themselves into smiles, despite her efforts, as she said meekly:

"I must go up and get a little sleep before I pack. I'm going to Cousin Homer's to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" fumed Bellona Dunning. "Just after we've given a dinner that will be talked of for months!"

She went on, with a ludicrous sort of half-angry, reluctant admiration: "I never saw you so fetching as you were to-night,

Vi. I planned campaigns as I looked at you. My Lord!—and you're daring to joke about going to Dr. Palmer's."

Gabriel Dunning stood back, his eyes very round, his mouth a bit open, and stared at this extraordinary young woman. Only her father seemed at ease, and sure that her triumphant expression covered nothing but success. Something knocked at the door of his heart—she was very like her mother, as she stood smiling so and looking at him. His marriage had been a love-match, and the loss of his young wife one of the things which set the machinery of his life to running wrong. If Violet was going to be happy, he could trust himself to love her; it was only young people in trouble which he could not relieve that he fled from. His clear, bright, beautiful eyes—steeled to look coolly upon the people and events of a life which ever threatened to take the whip-hand of him—his eyes softened upon this superb, victorious-looking daughter.

"Violet," urged Mrs. Dunning, almost in tears, "you'll not go away and leave this Californian? I'm sure—it's plain that he would be yours for the trying. Why"—in a bewildered tone—"you made a splendid beginning. And he's charming, in spite of his ridiculous views. And the money, Violet, the money!"

The girl paused, caught up her billows of drapery, and looked mischievously into the red, remonstrant faces of the Dunnings. Her gaze travelled past them to her father.

"Daddy," she said softly, "you told me that he played a very swift game. He does. We——"

"No! Oh, Vi, am I to get that trousseau?" cried Mrs. Roache-Dunning joyously.

The fair young face broke into dimpling smiles.

"N—o," she replied, and poised for swift upward flight. "No, thank you kindly, good lady. I have a—a certain hundred dollars by me, and I've been reading an article in a Sunday newspaper, all about how to buy a bridal outfit for that amount. I mean to test the proposition. You say I made a good beginning with him, Bellona? Then perhaps I shall make a good ending with him. He is going to take the house across the street from Cousin Homer's, and desires to be my 'young man across the way' while I am manufacturing that wonderful hundred-dollar trousseau!"

And she fled up the stairs, followed by the relieved laughter of the three.

Then for the first time Gabriel Dunning found voice. He slapped his thigh and chuckled enjoyingly.

"A quick trade!" he said. "Apt to be the most satisfactory. I'd no idea 'twould be so swift a deal—though I saw all evening that you two were as thick as thieves."



On the landing Violet, helpless with laughter, turned to look back.

Page Carter was no lukewarm wooer, but a very prince of lovers. From her young heart his tenderness, his eager ardor, his fond, deep admiration, had erased the grief and shame and despair which would have been evoked by that word.

"Thieves!" she echoed. "I thank you for the word, Mr. Dunning." She ran lightly up the remaining steps and on to her own room; the last they heard from her, blent with a little soft laugh, was:

"Thieves!"



## THE COURT OF FATE

BY MERIBAH PHILBRICK ABBOTT

I AM a Fool at the Court of Fate.  
 (Sing loud, sing low, my roundelay!)  
 Knowledge is mine, and wisdom great;  
*I know the story of Love and Hate,*  
 Of hearts that hunger, and tears that flow. . . .  
 A Fool am I—and I know, I know!

Listen to me, good masters, please.  
 (Sing loud, sing low, my roundelay!)  
 I've drained the draught on my palsied knees  
 That Sorrow holds, to the choking lees;  
 I've made my jest with Death at hand . . . .  
 A Fool am I—and I understand!

Ye who fawn at the Court of Fate  
 (Sing loud, sing low, my roundelay!)  
 Waste not pity on my estate—  
 Courtier, and Prince, and Priests that prete,  
 God send good to thee, friend or foe . . . .  
*Ye must learn—but I know, I know!*

# PERSONAL MEMORIES OF ROBERT E. LEE

*By Mrs. General Pickett*

A MAN in glittering uniform boarded the train at Richmond as my father was taking me from our home in Chuckatuck to school at Lynchburg. It was before the war made uniforms common and meaningful. I watched him with fascinated eyes as he came down the aisle, for he was tall and erect and walked with a firm step and a commanding air.

He stopped beside us, spoke to my father, was introduced to me, and, turning over the opposite seat, joined us for the rest of the journey. It was Colonel Lee, whose fame was already a part of our education. He shook hands with me in a grave, fatherly kind of way, and, taking one of my long curls in his hand, began to barter with me for it. In my diffidence I did not dare to take advantage of his quest for a price, though I would have given every curl on my head for one of his buttons, for even then Colonel Lee was a great hero in my romantic imagination.

He was on his way from Harper's Ferry, where there had been great excitement for a few days. John Brown and his men had descended on the town and taken possession of the United States arsenal. Colonel Lee had been on furlough at Arlington, settling the estate of his father-in-law, when orders had reached him to take the marines from the Washington Navy Yard and four companies of troops from Fort Monroe and disperse the mob, dispossess the instigators, and restore order to the terrorized little town in the Virginia hills.

It was not alone Harper's Ferry that had been alarmed. The entire State had been thrown into a turmoil of excitement. All through my infancy I had shuddered over the tale of the Nat Turner insurrection, but the John Brown raid had come into our daily life and was a subject of vital interest. I listened with intense fascination as Colonel Lee talked with my father about the strange old fanatic and his followers.

"I am glad we did not have to kill him," he said, "for I believe he is an honest, conscientious old man."

To hear the exciting tragedy discussed by the one who had commanded the Federal forces deepened my interest in the soldier of

whom I had already heard so many brave things. My eyes were fixed on him all the while he talked, with the same admiration which he won from so many more experienced. I saw him many times, and intimately, afterward; but there was something about him which always drew attention to the whole and away from details. A writer who wished to represent the great Confederate leader as he appeared to those who knew him best wrote to his daughter Mildred, asking how her father might be described, and she replied: "Oh, any way will do."

Apparently "any way" has very often sufficed, for the only external points upon which his biographers seem to agree are his extreme personal beauty and the grace of his horsemanship. His most intimate associates have attributed to him eyes of all hues within the range of eye-tints, and it is hardly strange that his child admirer received a first impression of grandeur and dignity which refused ever to be analyzed or to descend into specific features. I could never remember anything in particular but the clear threads of white scattered through his dark hair—hoar-frost which he brought home with him from the Mexican War.

When I first met him honors and age had brought that perfect, imperturbable gravity and dignity which characterized his later years, and rendered the stories of his youthful escapades almost beyond belief. To me he was always a hero. He came to me first in connection with the most important historic event which had occurred within my short existence, and remained with me always in association with the great problems which changed the trend of national history; for in less than two years the storm broke which was presaged when the unfortunate John Brown seized the arsenal at Harper's Ferry.

Unlike many of the leaders in the Confederacy, Robert E. Lee had no pet theory the maintenance of which required him to cast his fortunes with the South. A soldier by birth and training, he had belonged to the United States too long and too entirely to have developed an allegiance to the doctrine of State Rights—though long after the war he made the statement that had not that theory been taught at West Point, there would have been no secession. He had no quarrel with the Free Soil party. His aversion to slavery was so strong that he had already freed his own servants, and regarded those who had come temporarily under his care, at Arlington, as trusts whose interests were to be guarded till the time arrived when they would be free according to the terms of their former owner's will. Nor had he any personal ambitions to be served under the new flag of the Southern Cross. His Star of Promise shone clearly on the blue sky of the old banner.

After the Mexican War, General Scott frequently mentioned the distinguished services of Colonel Lee, calling him the best soldier he ever saw in the field, and saying that if opportunity offered he would prove himself the foremost captain of his time. The old general's heart was set upon seeing Lee fill his place at the head of the United States army, and no more pathetic letter was ever penned than the one Lee sent to General Scott with his resignation. The words were restrained and dignified, but between the lines one reads clearly the fall of a man's hope, the wreck of his ambition on the altar of home love.

After his resignation, the son of Light Horse Harry, riding with the grace inherited from that bold cavalier of the Revolution, became a sight familiar to the streets of Richmond. We never saw him pass without watching till he was gone from view. His horse was a magnificent creature, always perfectly groomed, and the love of the rider for the handsome animal was constantly evident. When he was returning from Mexico, eager as he was to see his family and dear old Arlington, Lee submitted to the delay of a long journey by boat rather than weary his horse by hard riding.

When at the battle of Seven Pines brave Joe Johnston, who was born to be in the way of bullets, was seriously wounded, General Lee was appointed to the command of the Army of Northern Virginia. He became the idol of his soldiers, one of whom, during a camp discussion as to the descent of man, was heard to exclaim:

"The rest of us may have come down from monkeys, perhaps, but it took a God to make Marse Robert!"

Lee's duties now kept him away from Richmond, except for occasional visits, and for a long time I did not see him. One day I was expecting General Pickett, and, looking out, saw him coming up the walk. I ran to meet him, and just then General Lee came out of the house next door, where he had been calling. Bowing to me and returning the general's salute, General Lee said:

"So you beat the train, General Pickett?"

"Yes, general," replied Pickett, laughing.

When we went in I asked what General Lee meant.

"I had to come to town," replied General Pickett, "because I had promised you. When I got to the station I found that General Lee had ordered that no officer should be permitted to travel by that train without permission from him, as it was a supply train. After issuing the order, the general had gone on into town, so there was no opportunity to get his permission. The only thing for me was to ride in on horseback, which I did, beating the train by some distance."

General Lee's extreme dignity held people instinctively at a dis-

tance, and impressed some as signifying a cold nature. I remember speaking of this to a friend who had been an officer in the Army of Northern Virginia, first under Johnston and then under Lee. He said:

"Lee was a great soldier and a good man, but I never wanted to put my arms around him and kiss him as I used to want to do to Joe Johnston—never."

"Did you ever want to do it to General Pickett?" I asked.

"To Pickett? Oh, I not only wanted to, but did," he replied.

But General Lee's dignified exterior covered a very warm heart, as was apparent in his care for his men. "They need them more than I do," he would say when special supplies were brought in for him, and he would immediately send them to the hospital. His simple tastes required few luxuries, even in times of peace and prosperity, and in war-time he never liked to fare better than the common soldiers in his command.

Though invariably considerate to his subordinates, Lee could be drastic and dictatorial when it became necessary; and if occasion required it, he could outrank the President. Jefferson Davis always claimed that he himself was intended for a soldier, not a President; and he was fond of being under fire, if he could not get behind the guns. One day he came out on the field during a battle. Lee turned to him and asked:

"Mr. President, am I in command here?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Davis.

"Then, sir," Lee replied, "I forbid you to stand here under the enemy's guns. I order you off the field."

The President went.

General Lee was noted for his impartiality. Only worthy deeds won recognition from him. He was urged by some of his officers to give his own son command of a brigade, but replied that he could not appoint an untried officer to so important a position.

He paid no more attention to personal antagonisms than to personal affection in the management of the army. He recommended a certain officer for promotion, despite the fact that friends urged him to withdraw his favor because the officer was in the habit of speaking disparagingly of Lee.

"The question is not what he thinks of me, but what I think of him," he said. "I have a very high opinion of this officer as a soldier, and I shall certainly recommend him for promotion, and do all in my power to secure it."

One of his officers, speaking of the enemy, once remarked: "I wish those people were all dead."



"How can you say that?" Lee remonstrated. "Now, I wish they were all at home attending to their own business, leaving us to attend to ours."

General Lee's disposition was always grave and serious, but he was not without a vein of humor. At Malvern Hill an officer who had made considerable noise during the battle without accomplishing any distinct results came to him and, pointing to a distant height on which was a group of soldiers, said: "I think, general, that I can take that hill now, if I have your permission to try."

"I believe that you would succeed now," Lee replied gravely. "There is only one thing that restrains me from giving you permission. I am afraid that you might hurt my friend, Captain ———, who is over there with a reconnoitering party. The enemy left the hill about an hour ago."

There never was a harder man to turn from his course, when once he had made up his mind that it was right. On the last day of Gettysburg, Longstreet, with his fixed policy of maintaining the defensive, pointed out that there was still time to manœuvre Meade into making an attack, but, shaking his clenched fist toward Cemetery Heights, Lee said:

"The enemy is there, and I intend to strike him!"

The blow he struck was Pickett's charge. But his resolution to attack was equalled by his magnanimity in defeat. When he met General Pickett leading his shattered and bleeding battalions back from Cemetery Heights, and he pointed with trembling hand to the few of his great division who could still follow him, Lee said:

"It is all my fault. You have done nobly. You and your men have covered yourselves with glory." Then, turning to the soldiers reeling back from the bloody height, he shouted:

"I have lost this battle. *You* must help me out of it the best you can."

Even in that bitter moment cheer after cheer told him that the men would stand by him to the last.

To one of his sons Lee wrote: "Duty is the greatest word in the language," and he himself lived up to it so well that Grant, in describing the interview at Appomattox, said: "I knew that it was useless to urge him to do anything against his ideas of what was right."

It was an echo of Lee's own reply to one of his staff officers, who asked what history would say of the surrender of an army in the field.

"I know that they will say hard things of us," Lee replied. "But that is not the question, colonel. The question is, is it the right thing to do under the circumstances? If it is, then I will take the responsibility."

One of Lee's strongest characteristics was the grave immobility of his face in times of the greatest stress of feeling. Grant speaks of it in his account of the surrender.

Meade and Lee were old friends, and immediately after the surrender Meade called on him.

"Meade," said Lee, "the years are telling on you, too. Your hair is getting quite gray."

"That is not the work of years, General Lee," Meade replied. "You are responsible for my gray hairs."

Some time after the war closed General Lee explained how it happened that he and his officers wore the handsome uniforms which have been mentioned in descriptions of the scene of the surrender. They had been compelled to abandon their wagon trains, and so had put on their best clothes to save them.

It has been said that General Lee never knew or cared what he ate. I remember once when he and his staff came to lunch with us at the Howlett House I made for them a Brunswick stew from squirrels and rabbits which some one had caught, and onions, corn, tomatoes, and lima beans. The general said it was the most delicious dish he had ever tasted.

"You know," he said, "I never eat anything but what I think of the soldiers. I am thinking of them now—of those who have always been used to having all the good things of the world."

One evening when there was a momentary respite at the front, General Pickett and I were invited to a Mrs. Shields's house, in Richmond, where we found General Lee. For refreshments we had ice cream made of frozen buttermilk sweetened with sorghum, and lemonade made from lemons which grew in the conservatory. Mrs. Shields apologized for having so much luxury, saying that there were more lemons on the tree, which she would send to the hospital. General Lee said:

"I will try to forget, and enjoy this lemonade, if you will promise not to forget to send the rest to the hospital."

This generous sympathy was not confined to war-time. Long afterward, a friend came up just as Lee was sending a poor fellow from his gate with a happy face. "An old soldier in hard circumstances," he explained.

When the friend asked to what command the soldier belonged Lee replied:

"Oh, he was on the other side, but we must not hold that against him now."

About the only thing I ever resented in General Lee was that he always called me "Sweet Nansemond." I came from Nansemond

County, and so did the famous sweet potatoes which the hucksters sold about the streets, crying, "Sweet Nansemonds! Sweet Nansemonds!" I always felt as if he were calling me a potato.

Lee was very fond of children. Mine idolized him. Only once a doubt concerning him crossed the mind of Corbell, the younger boy. After the war we used to spend our summers at White Sulphur Springs, and one summer General Lee was there taking the waters. My little Corbell was obliged to drink them, too, and strenuously objected. He said to General Lee:

"Don't drink that water. It doesn't smell good."

"But you drink it."

"I have to; they make me," Corbell said sadly. "But you are a man. They can't make you."

"But I like it."

Corbell confided to me afterward:

"They call him a great man, and he likes things that don't smell good!"

Coming in one day, General Lee found the children building block houses.

"Is this the house that Jack built?" he asked.

"No, sir," said Corbell; "that's the house that George built, and this is the house that Corbell built. Jack didn't build any houses down this way."

Mr. Peabody was at the springs that summer, a feeble old man with none of his old-time faculties left save the power of sympathy and the ability to help those in trouble. As he signed his papers with a trembling hand, Corbell watched him with deep interest.

"Your hand trembles with the thought of the good it has done," he said.

"Your little hand does not tremble."

"It doesn't tremble, but I can't write my name with it, and if I could write, I couldn't write it to money to do good with."

"You would rather have it as it is than to have it trembling and be able to write your name with it, wouldn't you?"

"No; I would rather have it tremble if I could write my name to money and do lots of good to people."

"When you are a man maybe you can write your name to money and do good to a great many people."

A little while later General Lee came to see Corbell when he lay very ill in Richmond. He sat beside him, holding the trembling little hand, and Corbell said:

"My hand trembles, and I can write my name with it now, but I can't write it to money to do good to people."

"The dear little hand has done far more good than it could do by writing your name to money," said the general tenderly. "It has written love, and that is the best thing that was ever written."

Then the general knelt beside the bed and prayed for the little boy.

It is my last sweet memory of General Lee, for I never saw him again. But I shall always remember best the great principle of his life as he found it and put it into the graphic expression:

"Human virtue should be equal to human calamity."

That thought comes vividly to mind when at Washington and Lee University we stand beside Valentine's marble figure of the great soldier of the South, recumbent, wrapped in his martial cloak, his sword sheathed at his side. The last years of his life, spent in quietly, firmly, patiently laboring for the new growth of his country, proved how truly he exemplified his motto.

When he died it was said that he had gone to the heights to break the solitude which surrounded Washington.

Through the courtesy of Messrs. J. E. Barr & Co., Philadelphia, we present a hitherto unpublished portrait of Robert E. Lee (see cover), painted in 1865 by J. W. King. The artist served in the Confederate army, and the officers on General Lee's staff declared it to be the best likeness of him ever produced.



## CONFESSIOAL

BY ELLA KINGSLEY WALLACE

ONE day—I don't know how it was—  
I told a horrid fib.  
Oh dear!—I can't imagine *why*  
It came so smooth and glib.

But then I thought and thought and thought;  
It hurt me so inside,  
I hid my face in mother's lap,  
And cried and cried and cried.

And she smoothed back my hair and asked,  
"Was what you said quite true?"  
And when I sobbed and shook my head  
She whispered, "Mother knew."



People whom we think are convulsed at our wit are often in spasms over our credulity.

# ON OUR STREET



*The First of a Series of Humorous Sketches  
of Neighborhood Types, by MARION HILL*

## THE SEMI-AQUATIC BENDERS

THE Benders live next door to us, and there are times when we wish they did not. One of the times is at five o'clock in the morning. From our last delicious matin slumber, which is precious to us as diamonds—especially when lost—we are irritatingly awakened by a “swish” and then a “whizzle,” and we know from unpleasant experience that Mr. Bender is out in the street with his hose, washing and watering everything that belongs to him, whether it needs it or not. Thieves and assassins have at least the grace to be ashamed of themselves, and to endeavor to hide their crimes, but the early riser inevitably strives to publish the fact, and whistles and sings and holds conversation of a would-be humorous nature with the milkman and iceman and other unfortunates whom fate and not depravity has led into evil ways. Mr. Bender, of course, has also the vice of cold-bathing, with its ever accompanying weakness of being impelled to tell every one of how delicious and exhilarating is the sensation. The “whizzle” gaining in impertinence, we know that Mr. Bender is hosing too near to us, and is probably flecking our parlor windows, spotting our porch chairs, and wetting our morning paper. We arise moodily and scowl at him from behind the closed up-stairs blinds. Glowering at a person who cannot see it is obviously a waste of effort—like gesturing through a telephone, or murmuring pleasant little nothings to a friend who thunders past in an auto. We creep back to bed in the hope of napping—of clutching a tail feather from swift-winged, vanishing sleep. It almost comes to us. Grown accustomed to the “swish” and “whizzle,” we are on the edge of a dream when a rude “swash” and “swazzle” bring us back to angry wakefulness: the Benders’ maid is out on their front stoop, dousing it with pail and mop. We might as well get up. We do.

As the day grows, so does the activity of the Benders’ waterworks. Soon comes a persistent “sozzle.” This indicates that Mrs. Bender has appeared on the scene and is watering her back



garden. A little later and Master Bender enters on a noisy engagement with a tub, a bar of carbolie soap, a pitcher, a dirty quilt, and the family dog, which protests hideously. We would, too, if we dared, for after the Benders wash their dog we always find a flea on our baby. We think it would be more neighborly of the Benders to leave the fleas on the dog instead of washing them under our fence and onto our infant. A little later still and the eldest Bender girl shows up on the back stoop, her head down and her hair hanging from it like seaweed. This she rinses in a hand basin, and then sits in a patch of sunlight, her meagre locks disposed over a chair-back. In the utterly imaginary seclusion of their rear premises, people do the most extraordinary things. They would not dream of performing them upon the front stoop, yet fewer eyes would be upon them there than in the spot of their choice. And, moreover, a woman, no matter how young, should hesitate long before putting her undefended beauty and her bumps on dripping exhibition. To the Miss Bender who is drying in the sun, comes another with her morning's laundering of a shirt-waist and a pair of cotton gloves, held temporarily between her teeth while she stretches a line to pin them on. These two are joined by a third, young Lily Bender, who wrings out a pair of black stockings and pins them on the line beside the gloves. It is to be hoped that those stockings will stretch, and stretch considerably, else they tell a sorry tale, being long and shapeless as umbrella covers.

A visit proves that the inside of the house is as waterlogged as the outside. "Please excuse Mrs. Bender, she is washing Baby," is your first greeting, no matter what the hour of your call. Now, either "Baby" is unspeakably grubby, or they wash "Baby" entirely too often. If you are invited up-stairs to witness that continuous performance, you note that the whole house is one vast wash-tub.

In the porcelain bath is, not "Baby," but dozens of its garments, soaking in soap and soda, while every chair is a clothes-horse. On the floor is a hard rubber tub in which are a few white things getting blued. In one bedroom a Bender is dabbling out handkerchiefs; in another bedroom another Bender is sopping stock collars in starch. In the cellar a Bender of courage is attacking a whole white dress. As a diversion, Grandma Bender is "doing up" some lace curtains, to the certain end that Grandma will be more done up than the curtains and will have to take to her bed to recuperate. The maid, who ought to be web-toed and web-fingered, poor thing, is down on her knees sloshing the hearths. Aunt Bender, who is lame and has to do sedentary things, is seated at the dining-room table, fishing very fine china out of very hot water, while the baby-that-used-

to-be-before-this-one-came is trying to float paper boats in a Haviland salad bowl.

Yet with the whole place adrip and awash, the Benders are not any cleaner than the rest of us. That they are as clean is open to doubt. Dirt is ever the penalty of over-cleanliness. You cannot ask one of the girls to go out with you, that she does not have to rinse a lace veil and shake it dry before she can budge. Like as not, she has also to iron a waist and press a skirt. People who wash so much and so often must be really dreadfully unclean, take it the year round. Moreover, people whose ears do not rebel against the mournful, wasteful, dreary sound of running water must have organisms coarser than most. And from that sound the Benders are never free. Mr. Bender rushes for the hose the minute he comes home from the office, and he saturates his tiny green napkin of a lawn with water enough to refresh a desert. He has whirling things that he prods into the grass, and he goes off to eat while a shooting spray messes up the sidewalk. Then, at midnight, when one might hope for better luck, one is kept restless and wakeful by a penetrating "wizz-wizz-swizz-wizz." It is the Benders' stationary hose playing persistently through the dark upon the Benders' moon-vine which ought to blossom and does not.

Belle Gibb calls the Bender house *Lodore*. Then she goes off into a peal of laughter. The allusion is evidently supposed to be "bright." It turns out that a long-dead poet called Southey once wrote a poem upon "How the Water Came Down at *Lodore*." One can dimly fathom Belle Gibb's joke. But if you do not chance to remember the poem, you think Belle is an idiot, and she simply *knows* that you are. All the Gibbs are that way.

## ONE NIGHT

BY GEORGE GERMOND

ONLY the moon remains of all that night in your garden,—  
Only the moon, and something tender we hold in the  
memory.

Now the branches are broken beneath whose shelter we wandered,  
Talking of hopes and ambition, thinking alone of each other.  
Long ago the flowers fell to the earth, and lay dying,  
We that warm summer night brushed aside in our treading.  
Hope, ambition, and dreaming all have followed the flowers;  
Only the moon remains, the moon and a tender longing.

# THE WAY OF A WILL

*By Beulah Marie Dix*

IN the years when the eighteenth century yet was new there dwelt in Glanby, on the Connecticut, a girl who possessed a will of her own. This was no marvel, for she was born a Glover, of the high-spirited and resolute blood of Glanby's first minister. To that, she lost her mother in the great December massacre, and thus was left, unguarded and uncounselled, to go her own defiant way. So when, in her seventeenth year, she made up her mind to marry the ne'er-do-well, Cephas Barnard, the result could easily be forecast. Though her father, Lemuel Glover, the stern old clergyman, forbade, though her stepmother dissuaded, though her sisters pleaded, in spite of them all Rachel Glover had her will in this, as in most things. She married Cephas Barnard, and almost from the day of her marriage began her repentance.

How bitter was that repentance, none knew. She had pride and to spare, this daughter of the Glovers. When Cephas came reeling drunk from the tavern, when he squandered the little store that she had from her mother, she still bore herself with serene dignity for the eyes of her neighbors. Though she was weak with child-bearing and with the hard toil of her daily life, she donned her shabby best and showed herself each Sunday at the meeting-house with as proud a demeanor as had been hers when she was Parson Glover's daughter. If in the nights of winter she and her children often lay cold, if at times they went hungry, if even, as was hinted, though never in her hearing, she herself more than once bore the marks of blows, she never breathed a whisper even to the nearest of her kinsfolk. Indeed, she shrank from her own, whose counsel she had disregarded, even more than from strangers. Too well she knew that of her own will she had made a bad bargain, and with all the proud resolution that was hers she set herself to make the best of it.

Even with her strong will Rachel might not have been able to keep up a lifelong show of contentment as the wife of Cephas Barnard. She might have broken down at last with tales of abuse and appeals for succor, but from this crowning humiliation she was saved. In the seventh year of their wedded life Cephas Barnard perished by the overturning of a skiff in the river, and in spite of her

pious upbringing Rachel found herself ready almost to give thanks to Heaven for this deliverance.

Although she was relieved by her husband's death of the heaviest of her burdens, Rachel staggered under a load that would have crushed a weaker spirit. She had five young children to feed and shelter, and she possessed nothing but Cephass Barnard's few sterile acres, half-way up the mountainside, and the dilapidated cabin that stood in their midst. With the complacent pity of those who see their prophecies of evil come to pass, her neighbors and kinsfolk among themselves compassionated her hard case and planned to the least detail how she should order her broken life. Huldah Bascom, a cousin by marriage, even mustered courage to go broach these plans to Rachel herself.

"To be sure, we all are ready to let by-gones be, now that the hand of affliction is heavy upon you," said the excellent Huldah. "Betsey Hoyt would give one of your girls a pious and thrifty upbringing, and your sister, Mary Allen, no doubt would take your babe, Joel. And Jonathan Weeks, the wheelwright, he allows he'd take your Lemuel and learn him his craft without the prentice fees, provided he has his time till he be one and twenty. 'Tis a generous proffer, Rachel, and you'd best pray upon it."

Rachel looked upon the speaker with level lids that half veiled her dark eyes. She was a slender woman, of a fine, alert carriage. In spite of her patched gown and her calloused hands, she queened it in the bare room where she sat. Over against her, Huldah Bascom seemed coarse and heavy, and felt the contrast, and resented it.

"I thank you kindly, neighbors all, for your great care of me," said Rachel, in a low voice that stung. "But I'll do for mine own children, if so please you; and for my Lemuel, 'tis not mine intent to make a craftsman of him."

Huldah Bascom knew herself insulted, yet sought in vain to find the actual cause of insult. She struck back, bludgeon-like, where the woman opposite her had wounded with the fine surety of a steel rapier. "'Tis as you please, to be sure! We all know the proverb of proffered service. But since the wheelwright's trade—and Jonathan Weeks mine own sister's brother-in-law!—is not good enough for Ceph Barnard's son, may I ask what course of life ye'll breed your Lemuel to? Perchance you mean him for a minister, it may be?"

To her own thinking, Huldah made in this question the most palpable of reductions to absurdity. That a son of Ceph Barnard, the town drunkard and ne'er-do-well, should aspire to the highest place of honor that the community held in its gift—why, the mere thought was preposterous! But, to the good woman's amazement, Rachel answered with the same unruffled calm: "Surely! That is

what I purpose for my eldest son. He will be a minister, as is befitting a grandson of Lemuel Glover."

In exultant consciousness of what she did, Rachel by that speech flung down a gauntlet to all Glanby. She would make them forget Ceph Barnard and the years of her shame—the years that they had foretold. She was a Glover—let them never forget that!—and her children were Glovers, who should take the place that befitted the old name. Through those children she would herself be justified for what, in her secret heart, she knew had been her own wilfulness. When a son of hers returned to Glanby, a minister of God's word, to sit in the high place of authority, who should dare to say that by her girlhood's folly her life had been wasted? Triumphant, in the face of hostile Glanby, she would have proved that, choosing Ceph Barnard, she had chosen well.

With a will made fiercer by years of thwarted hope, Rachel bent herself to accomplish this purpose. From morning till night she toiled, not only to meet the daily needs of her little flock, but to put by, a penny here, a penny there, against the day when Lemuel should be admitted to Harvard, his grandfather's college. With her own hands she sowed and reaped her poor acres, she mended the rotting thatch of her weather-worn cabin, she cut wood, she fetched water, yet through all she made time to do the fine weaving for which, from her girlhood, she had had a peculiar knack. With her carriage of a queen—or of a New England minister's daughter, which was much the same—she entered her neighbors' houses, with the proffer of her service at their looms. At a cost to her pride that none but a Glover could estimate, she wove and fashioned garments for hire, she did even more menial tasks in alien households, but she had her compensation, as penny by penny she watched the hoard for Lemuel's schooling grow.

As the years passed, Rachel found her toil less arduous. Her land, reclaimed from the neglect into which Ceph had let it fall, yielded enough for her simple needs. Her three girls, inured to labor from their cradle, bore the brunt of the housework, and Lemuel did the chores. But through this same Lemuel came to Rachel the cruelest stroke that Heaven could have sent. Month by month she had fought off the realization, fiercely, as if by her mere denial she could alter the truth, but at last, in the lad's twelfth year, she faced the inexorable fact: Lemuel was not only the grandson of old Parson Glover, but the son of Ceph Barnard.

To look at, he was a Glover, this slim, alert young lad, but he had Ceph's devil-may-care blue eyes—the eyes that had witched the wilful heart from Rachel Glover's breast. When aroused, he had the will of a Glover, as Rachel learned in more than one struggle to



maintain her sway, but at most times he had the lack of purpose behind the will, the thriftless good nature of his ne'er-do-well father. Like his father, he would rather whip the trout streams or ride his uncle Barnard's young horses, than sit bent over his book. It was in vain that Rachel addressed to Heaven what sounded like commands, rather than prayers, for an alteration in her first-born; in vain that she admonished and punished the boy. She might do much, with her will of a Glover, but she might not remake the lad who himself was one half Glover.

Bitter hours Rachel lived through when she took that realization to herself. At times she almost thought to give up the struggle, to admit that Barnard's children might not enjoy a Glover's birthright, to confess that she was not able, even by the putting forth of all her will, to undo the mischief that that same will had wrought. Thus she reasoned, faint-hearted, in the night watches, but when she went abroad in the daylight and met the eyes of her neighbors, so curious, as in her morbid pride she felt, to note her defeat, she stiffened her resolution. Her son—a son of hers and of Cephas Barnard's—should sit in Parson Glover's old place. If not Lemuel—well, she had another son. The babe Joel was now a chubby lad of six years, a true Barnard, fair, slow, and good-natured. He had in him nothing of the Glovers, his mother had often thought disparagingly, but he was a docile child and in exceeding fear of her. Without hesitation, once she had made her resolve, she started him in the path where his brother's wilful feet refused to tread.

Placidly Joel accepted this change of destiny and minded his book, as he was bidden, but young Lem Barnard, as he grew taller, developed a more and more rebellious spirit. Why must they live on hasty pudding and sell the bacon? Why must his sister Phebe grow stoop-shouldered with too heavy tasks? Why must he always wear a ragged coat? Only that Joel might later be gay and idle at college and live snugly as a parson, while his faded, toilworn sisters married humbly, and his brother—— “Since I've no trade, save to drudge on the farm, to keep Master Joel soft, what shall come of me later?” the boy grumbled to his favorite sister, Phebe.

As the years passed, Lem grumbled more loudly, until in his sixteenth year came an open quarrel with his mother. Deacon Barnard, the children's uncle, had given to Lem a motherless lamb, which the boy had tended and nursed till it was a salable creature. With the price of his lamb he meant to buy new shoes for Phebe, and a hood for Dorcas, and a kerchief for little Esther. In a hundred ways he spent the money for them. He was always generous-hearted, this Lem Barnard, with his father's eyes. But one week when he was working at Asaph Hoyt's sugar-camp Rachel sold the lamb and,

true to the one purpose to which her life was bent, added the money to the hoard that should pay for Joel's education.

When Lem knew what she had done and realized the unalterableness of her decision, he was for the moment all Glover. He spoke words keen-edged, such as Rachel herself might have chosen, such as she remembered, with bitter ache, in after years. As was her duty, she beat him with a rod, and he took the blows in silence, he that stood taller than she by half a head. Then he kissed his sister Phebe and went from the house, and he did not return.

More than a year later there came up-river from New Haven a letter for Phebe and a little package. In the letter Lem wrote that he was to go as a sailor into the West Indies in the ship the *Good Intent*, and he sent her herewith a little fairing. In the package were some new pins, and a gay kerchief, and a pair of tawdry shoe-buckles, poor trifles beside the gifts that the country lad had thought to buy with the price of his lamb. Poor though they were, Dorcas and Esther kissed them and cried over them, while in hushed voices they spoke of the joy that Phebe would have taken in them, could she have lived to see brother Lem's presents. For stoop-shouldered little Phebe had died of a quick consumption three weeks before.

Whatever Rachel felt at the loss of her two elder children, she hid from the sight of her neighbors. In stern phrases that none might deny, she said that Lemuel was an undutiful child, whom she hoped the Lord might spare till he came to a sense of his transgressions. She spoke in much the same tone, only perhaps a shade more harshly, when she had news, months later, that the *Good Intent* had been lost off Bermuda and that all hands had perished. But her daughters marked a deepening in the lines of their mother's face, and noted that at moments she let her busy hands drop idle to her lap. Fearful of her, sullenly resentful of her, they never dreamed that that stern soul was touched with sorrow, that, now it was too late, her heart yearned over the wilful boy, the child of the days of her love, who had held in him, as she knew, the best of her and of the man that she had given him for father.

In due time young Joel left the village school to sit under the tuition of Parson Allen, his cousin—tuition for which Rachel paid to the worth of a penny. A thousand times would she rather have taken aid from strangers than from her kindred, and she was the more set to take no charity toward Joel's schooling, because she knew that all, even her kindly sister, Mary Allen, held that her labor over the lad was fruitless and her high hopes doomed to disappointment. In her heart she must confess that Joel was slow and plodding, but when the more outspoken and courageous of her neighbors hinted as much, she answered them fiercely.

"'Tis ill weeds only that grow fast," said Rachel. "I tell you, Cousin Bascom, if you are spared to live, you will see my Joel called to be minister here in Glanby."

By the sheer force of her will she pushed good, lumpish Joel forward. She did indeed see him matriculate at Harvard, but he was older than most of his mates, and with sinking heart she realized that he would need a year more in which to finish his course of instruction than she had planned or provided for. Somehow she must have money—more money to quit his added charges—and in the task of earning that money she was now unaided, for her girls had left her. Dorcas had married a middle-aged widower, holding that any life were easier than that which she had known beneath her mother's roof, and Esther, crippled by a fall and hence a burden, had been suffered to go dwell with her aunt, Mary Allen. Rachel was left alone in her mountain cabin. Every hand's turn of her household tasks she must do with her own wearied muscles, and yet find strength for the toil in her neighbors' houses that should earn the price of Joel's instruction.

Furiously she bent to this added burden. She felt that she had now to justify not only her first step in marrying Cephas Barnard, but the course of life that had driven four children from her. All would be forgotten on the day when Joel, even as she had vowed, stood up to preach in Glanby meeting-house. But to make that day possible she must pay for his instruction money—and more money—and more!

Through heat and cold Rachel toiled, she prayed, storming Heaven with a fury of entreaty, but when she sent Joel to his last year at Harvard she still lacked five pounds—a little fortune—to quit his final charges. Under the cruel strain she fell ill. For two days of September heat she lay untended on the pallet in the one room of her cabin, but though her body was quiet, her active mind raged with its full strength.

"Money—money! Lord God, give me money, that I may rear this young man to do Thee service!" she cried over and over again, and cried in vain.

But one night, when her body burned with fever, she heard her voice shriek an altered prayer: "Lord Satan, since God will not hear me, do thou give me money to my purpose, lest I be made a mark to all men's scorning! Give me money—money!" and when she slept at last she heard in her dreams the clinking of good gold coins.

Weak and broken with sickness, Rachel none the less found resolution, upon the next day, to rise and drag herself down into Glanby village. She knew that the wife of Asaph Hoyt, the constable, had garments to fashion against the winter time. She hoped

to be employed in that task, and in fear lest it be given to another she hurried as fast as her trembling limbs would bear her. Even so, her haste was vain, for when she reached the constable's house she found strange men in the best room, half Glanby in the dooryard, and on all men's tongues a burning topic for gossip that put an end to the mere thought of the homely task of cutting garments.

"'Tis the sheriff from Springfield," Mistress Hoyt told Rachel, in evident joy to have a fresh listener. "And yonder stout fellows with him have come even from the Dutch at Manhattan. 'Tis a murderer they do be seeking," she explained, with gruesome relish, and went on to tell the story—a squalid, commonplace story enough: how one hot Sunday noon, in a distant outbuilding on a Long Island farm, a half-score of men, farmers' sons and hired servants, had been gaming and drinking hard cider, how rough words and angry had been spoken, how a blow had been dealt, and how, in the sequel, one man had lain dead and another had fled away, with the fear of the gallows to spur him; for the dead man was the dissolute only son of a wealthy Dutch farmer, and his slayer but a vagrant hired servant. That a jury of substantial men, who themselves hired servants, would give him short shrift, was clear to all hearers.

"They have traced the poor soul unto the Connecticut," Mistress Hoyt ran on. "They hold he will flee up-river to the French in Canada, for he has trafficked aforetime with the savages. Jack Winsted, they call him, a dark man of middle height, and hath two fingers of the left hand shot away. 'Tis all in a printed bill the sheriff showed us. The dead man's father offers five pounds to whomsoever shall take the murderer, but of a truth"—the good woman lowered her voice—"I'll never shed tears if he get clear away. Jack Winsted—sure, 'tis an English name, and no Englishman should hang for the killing of a mere jabbering Dutchman. Good speed to Jack Winsted, say I—yes, and I am not the only one in Glanby to say it!"

"Five pounds!" said Rachel slowly. "Five pounds! 'Tis a power of money!"

All the weary, hot way up Glanby street, up the steep path to her rugged mountain acres, she said over the words, "Five pounds! Five pounds!" At first she envied the man who could dispense such a sum to buy his dead son vengeance, and then she envied the man who should earn it by taking the murderer, and she wondered who that man might be—the happy man who should earn five pounds—five good English pounds—the sum that would buy her Joel his right to the ministry; that would buy her honor and justification in all eyes.

So slowly had she dragged herself along, such frequent pauses had she made to rest, that it was sunset when Rachel came at last in sight

of her cabin. It stood desolate and naked in the midst of its clearing, but across the weather-worn roof fell the long shadows of the trees that grew upon the mountainside. It was as if the mountain and the forest stepped forward, with the fall of night, to shelter and protect the spot. With an unwonted sense of coming to haven, Rachel paused, as she passed the open window of the cabin, and peered into the familiar room.

Instantly she sensed that something was amiss, even before she had accustomed her eyes to the dimness. Then she saw that the bread which she had left upon the table that stood across the window—bread that she had set out, but had had no appetite to eat—had been devoured, all but a crust. In anger at this loss, when every pennyworth was so dear to her, she peered more closely, narrowing her keen eyes, and in the farthest dim corner, on her pallet, she spied a recumbent figure. Face to the wall the man was lying. She could see no more than a broad shoulder, a laxly outflung arm, a dust-powdered leg, but she saw that from the hand that hung from the lax arm two fingers had been shot away.

She had dragged herself up the mountain-path, staggering, gasping for breath, but she ran down it as a man runs with the goal of his desire in view. A wild, dishevelled figure, startled for once from all semblance of her Glover bearing, she burst into Asaph Hoyt's kitchen.

"Give to me the five pounds!" she panted. "The murderer, Jack Winsted, lies sleeping in my cabin. Give to me the price of his taking!"

No one asked her to pause and rest in the village. Even in her exultation Rachel was aware that her neighbors condemned her action, as they had always condemned her. With her old defiance, she turned her back upon them, and, putting forth the last remnant of her strength, trudged up the mountain with the silent Glanby posse and the officer from down-river.

The great harvest moon was risen, and the little clearing was flooded with white light, when at last they reached the door of the mountain cabin. The constable hesitated, as if unwilling to enter, but Rachel lifted the latch and ushered them into her poor dwelling. The moon streamed through the window and made the place as light as by day. On the pallet the fugitive sat up, as if just awakened. His face was rough with an untended beard and haggard with weariness, but with the haze of sleep upon it, and in the kindly moonlight, it held for the moment something that was boyish and wistful. He looked upon Rachel, seeming not to see the posse at her back.

"Mother! Why, mother!" he said, and his voice was the voice of Lemuel Barnard.



It was a simple story as they gathered it from the young man, so simple, so possible, that it seemed to Rachel that instinctively she might have known that Lem Barnard and Jack Winsted were one. Her boy had not perished in the wreck of the *Good Intent*, but had escaped to live out his life as a sailor, a hunter, a rover, and a ne'er-do-well. Half a Glover, he had been too proud to creep back a prodigal to the home from which he held that he had been cast out, but in the time of his bitter need he had fled toward the land of his birth, the country whose hiding-places he knew, and, footsore, starving, wearied to the death, he had not had the strength to pass his mother's door.

Deacon Barnard went with the young man when he was returned, a prisoner, to New York. He bore letters from Parson Allen, all that a man might do he did, but there was no hope for Lem. A Glover to the last in a remnant of pride, he kept to the name that years before he had taken that his own might not be shamed. As Jack Winsted he was tried, and as Jack Winsted he went, with steady courage, to meet his death on the gallows.

The tragic story of his ending Deacon Barnard brought with him to Glanby and told, in stern phrases and brief, to the stricken mother. He found her alone in her cabin, whence for days she had not stirred. She should go her own way, she told him, tearless and unmoved beneath his unspoken condemnation; she asked naught of Glanby. For days indeed she kept apart, and Glanby, in smouldering anger against the betrayer of a Glanby man, left her to herself.

But one Sunday, when the first light snow lay crisp on the fields and the wind was chill, Rachel Barnard, erect and proud, came walking down Glanby street. She wore her poor best and in her arms she carried something wrapped beneath her cloak. So confident was her bearing that a flutter of indignation sped among the women who were gathered at the meeting-house door, and an angrier murmur rose among the men.

"Pelt her!" growled one lad, and caught up a frozen clod.

"Ay, chase her hence, the murderess!" came the echo, as more than one bent to seize a missile.

Smilingly Rachel stepped to Huldah Bascom's side. "Look, Cousin Bascom," she said, in her old alert fashion. "My little babe, my Lemuel—called for his grandfather, Lemuel Glover, sirs, ay, and shall preach in his grandsire's place, here in Glanby meeting-house! A towardly babe, and will bring me much joy. I pray you, look upon my Lemuel!"

She lifted her cloak. Beneath the flap, hugged to her shrunken breast, was a stick of birch-wood, and her neighbors, with the outcry against her hushed upon their lips, marked then the blankness in

her wide eyes. The men let fall their clods, shamefacedly, while compassionate ones of the women led her away. She went submissively, still babbling to them of her boy Lemuel, who should one day preach among them, and thus she babbled, mindless, to the end of the long years of her life.

Her kinsfolk gave her shelter and tendance, and, now that her will no longer withstood them, paid Joel's tuition fees and saw him established in the ministry. He was a dull, plodding man, but in time he did indeed come to preach at Glanby, though Rachel, dandling her birch-wood stick in the chimney-corner, could not be made to realize the honor that had befallen him in answer to her prayers.



## NEGATION

BY MARGARET CROWELL

I SING a song to numbness,  
A song to the left behind;  
Poor insignificant dumbness,  
Heartless, deaf, and blind;

To the hearts that were strong and fearless,  
And have dwindled slowly away,  
Till nothing is left of the peerless  
Strength of another day;

To the graceful minds arrested,  
That sleep in a dreary bed—  
Sleep in the hour they're tested—  
For practice, to learn to be dead.



## ABOUT MEN

Men like to burn incense—unless the shrined one babbles.  
All that man has done man can do—except fool a clever woman twice.

A Cynic is a man who has had his fingers pinched in the door of Chance.

There is nothing that limbers a man's back so quickly as the swish of Beauty, or the outriders of Midas.

The man who says all he thinks—should be expurgated.

*Esmé Allison*

# THE INVEIGLING OF GEORGIE

By *Dorothea Deakin*

“**D**EAR little girls these Argentines are, bless them!” Carlyle lit a fresh cigarette reflectively, and looked with haste away from the señorita who had with evident pleasure just caught one of his straying glances.

“Girls,” said Georgie shortly, “don’t interest me. Not now. They used to when I was younger, but—well, you never quite know what you’re doing when you show a friendly interest in a girl, do you? I’ve had too much experience.”

He was then about twenty-three, I believe, and a picture to please any eye: a cold-bath-every-morning, clean-shaven, cropped-haired, clear-eyed youth from Lancashire or Yorkshire, with a particularly winning smile and an open, ingenuous, and confiding manner.

“I’ve done with girls,” he insisted, with a determined straightening of his small mouth. His friend did not express any doubts he may have felt, and Georgie went on, his eyes on the low scrubby bushes of the river bank. Carlyle still glanced furtively at the pretty Argentine, standing with her father in the bows of the little *relampago* which was carrying them all up the wide, muddy Plata to Rosario. Carlyle was travelling for a Manchester shipping house, “selling rags,” as he elegantly put it. Georgie, an old school-fellow and fellow foot-baller, had fallen in with him at the English Club in Buenos Ayres, and had offered to come up to Rosario with him to help pass the time, which was already beginning to fall heavily on his hands. He was going out to a ranch, and was waiting to make some final arrangements. Business in the Argentine, he found to his disgust, cannot be hurried.

“You see,” went on Georgie thoughtfully, “you have to be so jolly careful or you find yourself engaged to ’em before you can turn round. They’re always thinking you mean—well, what you never did mean, don’t you know? Girls have—well, they have the most lurid imaginations at times.”

Carlyle laughed. “Wonder what you’d think of them out here,”

he said. "I can tell you I've had some near things. There was a girl at Santiago—I only saw her three times, but I had to clear out of the town a week earlier than I should have done. I had to forget the interests of the firm. They rather look out for English travellers, don't you know, in Chili. Next time I went I had to say I was married—showed my wife's photograph all over the town. It's the parents who do it. People don't lose time in those things out here, I can tell you."

"Being engaged," Georgie admitted, "has its points. But if you're not jolly careful you find that it's going to change your whole life. It gets in the way of foot-ball and all the things that matter seriously to a chap's happiness. And, hang it all! you can't have all the really important things of life destroyed by a moment's weakness, can you?"

"Certainly not," Carlyle assented gravely. He was a little older than Georgie.

"And that's how it is," Georgie finished ingenuously, "that I have made up my mind not to look at a pretty girl again."

"Very wise of you," his friend admitted, without a smile.

Georgie turned round, with his back to the uninteresting river bank. There was nothing to vary the monotony of the sight but an odd, squalid wooden shack or two built on piles.

"You're quite right about her eyes," he murmured. "Black stars, I call 'em. They've all got ripping eyes out here. Wicked and yet kind, don't you know."

"I know," said Carlyle, who did indeed, and very nearly to his cost in Santiago.

You see by this, of course, that Georgie was in a perfectly safe and well-protected state of mind, and no one could say it was his fault that Carlyle met Martinez at the hotel, when he and Georgie were beginning the morning in an approved commercial way by throwing dice for cocktails. And Juan Martinez, liking the clean, honest look of Carlyle's young friend, invited them on the spot to ride out the next day to his *estancia* and dine with him. He, in his hospitable Spanish way, would send his own horses into town for them. It was Carlyle who accepted for them both, for Georgie's Spanish was of the slightest, and at the first time of hearing Martinez's scrap of English was hardly intelligible. But the liking was mutual, and Georgie beamed at the pleasant little man in his own inimitable way, and thanked him for his invitation, unconscious of any danger which might lie therein.

"Hospitable chaps, these *estancieros* are," Carlyle murmured as he left them. "I've never been out to Santa Rosa, though. We'll go, Georgie. You'll enjoy the ride out, and get a chance of seeing

the way these Argentines live. I don't think Martinez has any children."

He spent the next morning haggling over prices with his three customers, and Georgie was left to his own devices. One of these, I am ashamed to say, was to wait an hour outside a church to catch another glimpse of a little rose face and a black lace mantilla which had caught his straying glances on the way to confession, and, as a reward, to pick up a dropped book of devotions, to receive an unforgettable smile from a pair of unforgettable eyes, and a murmured "*Gracias, señor,*" from unforgettable red lips.

"The sort of eyes and lips," Georgie said sadly, when he had lost sight of them forever, "that a chap might go on seeing in his dreams for years. Perhaps I'd better not look at any more of 'em. You never know."

Certainly he never did.

They rode out to Santa Rosa over the flat, coarse grass plains, exchanging frank opinions at odd intervals on the heat. The little Argentine horses pleased Georgie with their easy, cantering step. He rode well, of course.

The house they found was the usual kind of one-storied red brick building faced with adobe, built round a patio with a fountain in the middle. The *estanciero* came out to meet them, and beyond the fountain, amongst rose-bushes and oleanders and orange-trees, Georgie caught a glimpse for a moment of white gowns and heavy, dark hair. Martinez, then, was not childless. His sweet-voiced, enormously stout señora welcomed the young men graciously, and for one thing and another Georgie felt that perhaps South America had not been altogether a mistake.

That was before he saw Margarita. There were three girls, and she was the eldest—possibly eighteen—with the beauty of a southern night and of the moon and all the stars in her eyes and hair. She wore something white and soft and exquisitely becoming, and had stuck a distracting yellow rose over her little ear. Carlyle watched Georgie's expressive face.

"Of course, if he's going to live out here, he'll have to get used to the way they look at a fellow," he said to himself doubtfully. "I used to find it precious upsetting at first, but you've only got to be careful. You can get hardened to anything in time. Wish I'd told the young idiot more about the customs of the country, though. He'll put his foot in it if he goes on in the promising way he's begun. And Martinez isn't so well off—for a big *estanciero*. He'll want to get his girls settled. Three of 'em, too."

The other two were not beauties, like Margarita. As Georgie afterwards put it, they were all right, only they didn't seem to matter.



Margarita played the piano prettily, in school-fashion, and afterwards tinkled a mandolin and sang a delightful little song about a dove. It was called "*La Paloma*." Every now and again she lifted her black lashes and looked at Georgie with the eyes he called black stars, "wicked and yet kind." Oh, Georgie, Georgie! His head was lost; his heart with his eyes, his eyes with Margarita. Literally he could not drag them away from her. When she crossed the room for her mandolin, he followed her and helped her choose a song. He found her absurd attempts at English adorable. Martinez and his señora looked pleased, and Carlyle noted this with deep anxiety. Some haunting, unpleasing memory of Santiago perhaps warned him that Georgie was playing with fire—Georgie, who so absolutely knew not what he did.

"You like Rosario, señor—yes?" the youngest girl asked. Georgie said fervently that he should rather think he did. It was a ripping little place. When tea was served at ten o'clock, he had promised to come out to Santa Rosa again the next day. Carlyle, he knew, was engaged with a customer, and could not come with him. For twenty minutes at least Georgie and Margarita had a tête-a-tête in a distant window-seat, and, although each found the remarks of the other almost unintelligible, Georgie found that mere words were hardly necessary to either of them. They were watched with warm interest by all the others, and Carlyle noted with apprehension this decided sign of approval in the girl's parents. If Georgie only knew!

"He can clear out, of course," he told himself; "but it won't be pleasant if he's going to live in the Argentine. Every one knows Martinez in Buenos Ayres."

The *estanciero* beamed at his guests as he said good-night. "*Ya conoce su casa, señor*." The hospitable intimation that the house was henceforward as their own came to his lips with fervent sincerity.

"Thank God we're out of that!" Carlyle cried ungratefully as they rode away.

"I wish I could talk Spanish," Georgie murmured dreamily.

"You've done pretty well without it." His friend's tone was short.

"Handicaps a chap tremendously, don't you know, to sit tongue-tied with a girl, looking at her like a blithering ass."

"You've made quite enough ass of yourself as it is, without the Spanish language to help you on your promising career," Carlyle burst out.

"What d'you mean?"

"Do you want to marry that girl, Georgie?"

"Good Lord, no! Not going to marry anybody."

"If you go on in the way you've begun to-night," Carlyle said, with some spirit, "you'll find yourself jolly well mistaken about that. You're not in England, Georgie."

"No." Georgie looked thoughtful. "*Espero que le veremos amenudo*"—what do you make of that, Carlyle?"

Carlyle gasped. "Did Margarita say that?"

"Yes, twice. What does it mean?"

"Only that she hoped she was going to see you often. You must have got on fairly well in spite of your limited opportunities. For a well-brought-up girl out here, it was frankly encouraging."

"I expect it's only their polite way," Georgie murmured sadly.

"See here, Georgie," Carlyle remarked firmly, "you've got to draw back while there's time. Do you see? You don't understand these South Americans. If you look twice at a girl out here, her father begins to ask questions about your financial affairs. If you sit away in a corner with her, as you did to-night, you're committing yourself beyond recall. They don't lose time with these things in the Argentine, you know."

"But I've never even spoken to the girl alone," Georgie said indignantly.

Carlyle whistled. "No, and you won't," said he. "You wouldn't if you were engaged to her. It isn't the custom of the country. But you see what I mean? You won't be angry with me if I advise you not to go near Santa Rosa again?"

"I'm dining there to-morrow." The obstinate youth set his mouth rigidly.

"Well, I've warned you."

"Oh, you're an old woman," said Georgie, with engaging frankness.

Whereupon Carlyle once and for all washed his hands of his friend's affairs.

Georgie came home very late the next night, and found Carlyle waiting for him outside the hotel, drinking Italian vermouth and curiously unresponsive.

"Ripping evening." Georgie beamed at him.

"Ah!"

"Another chap there—another Martinez. Didn't seem to be much in favor with any of them."

"Ramon?" Carlyle asked idly. "Very young? Sulky looking?"

"Yes," said Georgie. "Margarita wouldn't even look at him."

"Indeed!"

"Jolly good dinner," Georgie went on. He was flushed and enthusiastic. "Champagne to-night, Carlyle. Good champagne, too."

"What do you say?"

"Champagne. Why not?"

"Oh, nothing." Carlyle struck a match viciously.

"Why not?" Georgie demanded.

"Nothing except that it proves how extremely right I was," his friend said, with studied amiability. "Go on, Georgie. I congratulate you."

"Thanks." Georgie flung himself into a chair. "You're a bit premature."

He gazed at the glittering lights of a little café further down the street, and said softly under his breath something in Spanish.

"What!" Carlyle sat up and stared at him.

"*No me gustan las despedidas*," said Georgie dreamily. "What do you make of that, Carlyle?"

"A good deal." Carlyle spoke with emphasis.

"Interpret, there's a good chap."

"Did Margarita say that?" his friend asked quietly.

Georgie roused himself.

"Never mind who said it," he replied; "what does it mean, anyhow?"

"It means, 'I don't like saying good-by to you,' " Carlyle translated for him grimly. "I don't suppose she did. I don't suppose any of 'em did. When are you going again, Georgie?"

"To-morrow," Georgie answered cheerfully. "There's a ride and a kind of picnic arranged. They want you to go as well."

"Thanks. I have an engagement to-morrow. Are you going to marry this girl, Georgie?"

Georgie was silent. Carlyle gazed at him in some consternation, for I suppose, in view of his extreme youth, he felt to some extent responsible. Perhaps only because he had a sincere affection for Georgie's charming mother, who had in his misunderstood teens made several lonely summer holidays pleasant to him.

"Georgie," he said softly, after some thought, "how do you like the señora?"

"Nice old thing," said Georgie easily. "Pity she's such a mountainous lady."

"She's not very old," said Carlyle gently; "only thirty-eight."

"Nonsense!" The boy stared at him.

"Thirty-eight," said Carlyle again. "She was a beauty when she was a girl, they say. Like this little Margarita thing, only prettier—and slim."

"*Slim?*"

"Slender," explained Carlyle pleasantly. "Willowy. Svelte. Fragile. Slight. Wand-like. Thin——"

"Oh, chuck it!" Georgie interrupted rudely. "Margarita's got a ripping little figure. I hate a woman to be a scrag."

"So do I," Carlyle assented smoothly. "At thirty she will be as stout as her mother is *now*. At thirty-eight——" He paused for effect, and Georgie stared at him in horror. He thought of his own delightful mother, handsome, elegant, and youthful, and then of Margarita's. He was appalled.

"You see?" said Carlyle. "In fifteen years she will be fat and lazy and jealous. She will probably have cause for jealousy if you go on as you have begun. I ask you, Georgie, is it worth it?"

The boy was silent, gazing moodily before him.

"Give up the picnic, Georgie. Write a polite note, saying that you are unavoidably called back to Buenos Ayres. They didn't bring out the champagne for the sake of your *beaux yeux*, you know—nor for poor young Ramon Martinez. Give it up."

Georgie rose.

"I'm going to bed," he said, with some dignity. "Thank you very much for your advice. Allow me to tell you that you're making mountains out of molehills. I haven't the least intention of marrying the girl. You needn't worry about me."

Carlyle, if he thought differently, gave it up and said no more.

Georgie slept the untroubled sleep habitual to him, but Carlyle, principally on account of Georgie's admired mother, tossed about a good deal, allowed himself to be unnecessarily worried by the mosquitoes, and wondered how he was to get her pig-headed boy out of his scrape. And he went about the next day with a worried air, and offended his best customer by his unpardonable absent-mindedness. He waited for Georgie's return with keen anxiety. When he saw that youth's perplexed and moody face, he felt that his fears had been justified.

"You were quite right," Georgie confessed, with ingenuous candor; "I'm afraid I have got into a bit of a mess, Carlyle."

"No!" Carlyle said ironically. "I can't believe *that*, Georgie."

Georgie laughed uneasily.

"I'm rather afraid I have, don't you know. They seem to expect all sorts of things of me. Of course I've only a hazy, sketchy sort of notion about the rotten way things have turned out, through my knowing next to no Spanish. But, honestly, I do seem to have rather put my foot in it this time."

"Go on!" Carlyle gazed at him with alarmed interest.

"Well, rather an unfortunate thing happened to-day when we were out riding."

"*What?*" Carlyle asked, in an agony of apprehension. "You didn't propose, or——"

"Worse than that," said Georgie sadly. "At least, if I'd proposed I might have got out of it by explaining that I'd meant something quite different in my own language. Mixed up the words or used wrong ones, don't you know."

"What *did* you do?"

Georgie frowned.

"It wasn't my fault. We got behind somehow, you see. I happened to be riding near Margarita, and then we came to one of those straight wire fences. These little Argentine brutes don't take a fence clear and clean like an English horse, but they scramble over 'em two legs at a time. You have to dismount. Well, Margarita's mount, cursed brute, refused to get over anyhow. I couldn't leave her, naturally, and by the time we gave up trying to make it the others were out of sight. We had to ride round about six miles to find a gate, and when we'd found it we'd lost the rest of the party. And I'd like to know how we could help that?"

Carlyle was speechless. I think he managed to convey his feelings by a groan.

Georgie went on.

"We didn't find the others for nearly an hour and a half, and, after all, what did it matter? Why, at home——"

"You're not at home," Carlyle broke in impatiently.

"I wish I were," poor Georgie said with fervor; "at least, at moments like this I do. They simply glared at us when we rode up, and the other two girls kept between me and Margarita for the rest of the day. Martinez wasn't uncivil, of course—at least, as far as I could tell, he wasn't—but he seemed to be trying to edge me off alone with him all the time, to be waiting for me to explain, don't you know. How the devil was I to explain when I didn't even know what the Spanish word for fence was. When we came to another, I pointed to the beastly thing and said, as well as I could, that it was because of *that*; but they thought I was afraid my horse was going to jump it, and told me it wouldn't attempt such a thing till I got off. And when I remember the kind of hedges I used to take at home, I can tell you, Carlyle, it made me feel precious small beer. And that cousin of theirs, the blithering young idiot they call Ramon, laughed in the kind of way that made me determined to punch his head for him the first time I met him alone. Not that he mattered at all, for every one sat on him at once. They always do."

"Go on, Georgie."

"I seemed to leave under a kind of cloud," he finished earnestly. "Margarita tried to cheer me up when I said good-by by saying, '*Hasta luego, señor,*' but, as I said before, she was separated from



me most of the time by the rest of her family. And when I rode out of the gate, she threw this." He gazed sentimentally at an exhausted yellow rose in his buttonhole.

"She didn't seem to mind what they thought," said he; "she's got no end of a spirit, that little girl."

"Yes?" said Carlyle. "Is that all, Georgie?"

"All!" Georgie groaned. "No, there's the worst to come now. For Martinez is going to ride into Rosario to-morrow to see me. What for, do you suppose?"

"Clear," advised Carlyle earnestly. "Don't see him. Clear before he comes."

"From what I could gather in my cursed ignorance of the absurd language," Georgie pursued, with a worried air, "he is coming up for an explanation."

"Don't give it," said Carlyle. "You can't. There's only one explanation he wants, and you can't give that. Clear."

"I'm hanged if I do that!" Georgie said doggedly. "They shan't say that an Englishman was afraid to face the music."

"There's no other way now," Carlyle went on hastily. "It'll spoil our trade in the town. I shall lose every customer we've got, but there's your mother to think of, Georgie. Clear!"

Georgie set his teeth.

"No," said he; "it's impossible. And, besides, you've forgotten the girl. You forget Margarita. They'd make it pretty hot for her, I expect, if I did."

"She deserves it," Carlyle said hotly. "She knew, if you didn't. She went for you, Georgie, from the very first. Even I noticed that."

"If you think," said Georgie quietly, "that I'm going back on her after all this, you're jolly well mistaken. See?"

Carlyle groaned.

"I shall explain," said he largely, "or, rather, you will. You will come and interpret, and make things smooth for everybody. You can speak Spanish. It will be easy enough for you."

"My God!" Carlyle stared at him.

"Yes," said Georgie kindly; "you're used to making the best of things to these poor brutes who buy your rotten flannelettes. I shouldn't think it would be any more difficult to you than lying about your confounded calicoes."

"Are you mad, Georgie?"

"You're full of tact," his young friend pursued, with some warmth. "Just think over a few diplomatic speeches. If you like to say I am engaged to a girl in England, you can. It's a desperate case. Or you might even, if the worst comes to the worst, say you're afraid I'm—well, more or less married."

"Georgie!"

"Yes," he said firmly; "married—more or less."

"Martinez will shoot you if he thinks you're married," said Carlyle, in a tone of quiet exasperation.

Georgie's eyes brightened.

"Oh, if it comes to a row!" he said eagerly. "Is there really any hope of a scrap? If it only could be settled in a simple way like that——"

Carlyle gasped.

"We'll try diplomacy first," said he hurriedly; and Georgie laughed, full of boyish delight at this new and delightful contingency.

Martinez greeted them next day with ceremonious politeness, but his face was grave. He did not smile. And after the usual complimentary preliminaries he told Carlyle why he had come.

"He wants you to explain." Carlyle turned to Georgie with ill-concealed gloom and apprehension.

"Explain what?" said Georgie.

"Don't be a young ass." Carlyle addressed his friend under his breath, with some heat.

"Tell him about the fence. Ask him what the devil they put up such rotten fences for, if their confounded horses refuse to take them."

"I have," said Carlyle practically; "and he still wants you to explain."

"There is no explanation," Georgie said coolly. "I've told the truth. Tell him I'm sorry, but I can't do better than that. It happens to be the custom in our country."

"There's nothing to be gained by insulting the man"—Carlyle's voice was low and angry—"and you never know how much he understands of what we're saying."

Here Martinez made a remark in tones which, though still quiet, were authoritative.

"He says you rode off alone with his daughter, and that no doubt you are in love with her."

"By Jove!" Georgie passed a dazed hand over his forehead.

"He says people will talk about his daughter now."

"Tell him he shouldn't have such a pretty daughter if he doesn't want her to be talked about," Georgie suggested brilliantly. "That'll please him, and smooth things down all round."

"Do you really think so?" Carlyle murmured grimly. "My poor Georgie!"

"*Supongo que usted se casara con mi hija.*" Martinez appeared to be growing impatient of Georgie's strange obtuseness.

"That means," Carlyle translated rapidly, "'I suppose you will marry my daughter.'"

"Tell him not to suppose anything so absurd," said Georgie hastily.

"My friend says he doesn't understand you"—Carlyle turned to Martinez with his very liberal translation.

Martinez smiled in a forced way.

"He says, Georgie, that it is the custom to make immediate proposal of marriage after such an escapade."

"Tell him it's not my fault they've got such rotten customs over here."

"Don't be a fool," Carlyle said, in a vicious undertone. "For God's sake, try to be civil if you can. He says now that he *insists* upon your marrying Margarita."

Georgie plunged his hands in his pockets and set his teeth in his inimitable British way.

"Tell him I'll see him hanged first!" cried he.

I don't know what reply Martinez got to his demand from Carlyle, but I fancy Georgie's face and obstinate young mouth were enlightening to the quick-witted Argentine. He spoke in voluble, smooth tones, more agitated as he went on, with free explanatory gestures of his lithe brown hands. Carlyle listened with a distressed face.

"Georgie, you've made a pretty mess of things. He says he left the girl crying her eyes out over you. He says you have trifled with her young affections and spoiled her life. He *says* you came to the *estancia* like a snake into a dove-cote. Oh, he says a lot of nice things!"

"By Jove!" Georgie was thunderstruck. "Crying for me? Margarita crying her eyes out! *Those* eyes! By Jove!"

He walked across the room to the window and stared out blankly. His own eyes grew soft. Perhaps a thorn from a dead yellow rose in his pocket-book pierced through to his heart.

"You think Margarita thought—you think *she* thought I meant—well, this sort of thing?" he asked slowly.

"Good Lord, Georgie, it doesn't in the least matter what *she* thought!" Carlyle was finding his own share of this curious interview almost more than he could manage.

"You think it's true that those people who were with us yesterday will talk?"

Carlyle shrugged his shoulders.

"What if they do?" he asked fiercely. "What am I to say now? I've told him you're engaged, and he says that is nothing to him. He says English engagements are made only to be broken. He's often heard so, he says."

"Do you think he is speaking the truth when he says it will spoil her life?"

"Oh, I don't know," Carlyle said unwisely. "I'm jolly sure you'll spoil yours if you don't get out of this quick."

Georgie squared his shoulders, turned, and walked back, with a pale and determined face.

"Will you tell him, Carlyle, please, that I request the honor of his daughter's hand in marriage?"

"Georgie!"

"Yes," said Georgie; "I'm not a hound. I ought never to have come to this confounded country. I see it now."

"You really mean to marry her?"

"I do," said Georgie tragically; but I think a memory of Margarita's eyes buoyed up his sinking spirits.

Carlyle, with a hopeless gesture, turned to Martinez and interpreted. The dark, gloomy face lit up, and the South American embraced them both.

Carlyle will not soon forget the disgust on the boy's face as the Argentine kissed him. And then, at that crucial moment, a messenger from Santa Rosa flung himself from his horse and clattered in to find the *estanciero*. He brought a note from the señora to her husband. Martinez took it in some surprise, and they watched his brown face grow purple as he read. A little slip of an enclosure fluttered out and lay unheeded at his feet. He turned with dazed eyes to the two young men, begged a thousand pardons, and rushed from the room. They heard him ride away a few minutes later, and stood gazing at each other in vacant surprise. It was Georgie who picked up the slip of paper—a tiny note addressed to "Señor Don Jorge."

"It's for you," said Carlyle.

Amazed, Georgie opened it, studied it blankly for some seconds, then handed it over to his friend in despair.

"It's a fool of a language. Can't make head or tail of it," said he. Carlyle read it, said, "Good Lord!" and read it again.

"Considering that it's addressed to me," Georgie began, with some heat, "I think you might translate it, instead of sitting there roaring with laughter. What the devil is it?"

"It's from Margarita," Carlyle said—"Margarita herself. Little cat! She's been using you as a blind, Georgie, and taking in her whole family with her infatuation for you. She's been making a pretty fool of you, old chap."

"What!" said Georgie, growing crimson. "A fool of me?"

"No need for *you* to clear off now," said Carlyle cheerfully; "*she's* done that. To Bahia Blanca."

"Bahia Blanca?"

"With her cousin Ramon. The priest, who is a brother of Ramon's, married them at seven o'clock this morning. It's a funny little note. She says that you are not to weep for her, and that you may keep forever the rose she threw to you last night."

"Oh, I may, may I?" said Georgie grimly. "What's the blooming postscript, anyhow?"

Carlyle laughed softly.

"She doesn't like to say good-by," said he, with an amused glance at poor Georgie. "*No me gustan las despedidas.* That's the postscript."



## LOVE'S DISSEMBLING

BY CHARLES H. CRANDALL

MY love has locked her love within her heart  
 And on her tongue has set a dainty seal;  
 That I may not divine what she may feel;  
 But Eros, laughing boy, has pried apart  
 The bars that hold him and doth slyly dart  
 Out by her eyes, that still to love are leal,  
 While o'er her cheeks the changeful roses steal,  
 Those hues of which Love only knows the art.

Upon her lips, that proud defiance dare,  
 Love lays a gleam of cherry, while her words,  
 Inconsequent, he sets to music rare,  
 The envy of an audience of birds.

"I love you not," she murmurs, all a-tremble.  
 Ah, lovely lips, so sweetly to dissemble!



# THE SOUL OF NANA SAHIB

by George Seibel



## MAJOR BELKNAP SPEAKS

I KILLED him with one shot. The bullet crashed through the left eye into the brain. He measured clear thirteen feet and seven inches from the tips of his ears to the tip of his tail. And he was A1, every shred of him. Not a gray hair on his side—supposing that tigers get gray hairs. Not a tooth in his jaws touched with rot. The real man-eater, you know, is usually just the wreck of a tiger, retired from the jungle. Can't catch striped deer any more, and a buffalo is too much for him. So he comes down to coolies and other crumbs that fall from the human table. A man-eating tiger is usually moth-eaten himself and frayed; he's got that tired feeling, and his smile came off long ago. No self-respecting beast would touch a coolie, who's one more proof that man was made of mud and fried in grease. But this fellow—look, he seems to stretch himself in a fit of pride—was the finest ever killed within three hundred miles of Ambur. He might have had deer cutlets or ox steak every day, but he seemed to show a preference for man, just as you see some fine-looking women that will chew gum.

It's always been my notion that I was responsible for the death of those fellows. I fed 'em too well. We were working on the Madras-Calicut railroad, carrying it past Ambur, skirting the hills, and I had about six hundred coolies with picks and spades and baskets. Baskets to carry the earth, you know. They can't manage a wheelbarrow—it beats 'em. Sim Davis—he died at Darjeeling six years back—tried it once. Brought a couple of barrows from Hyderabad, and threw his coolies' baskets away. Came back half an hour later to catch 'em filling the barrows and carrying them off on their heads. Labor-saving devices are lost on the coolie. His lanky carcass needs labor, and lots of it, and not too much feed. It interferes with his working; makes him fat and lazy, some say; and attracts tigers, say I. At any rate, yon fellow stretched out so flat and peaceful, winking at the blaze with his one wicked eye, found my coolies just to his taste.

He'd got four before we missed 'em. Number four let out some blood-curdling yells that brought us to the spot with guns. His Bengal Highness sat there on his haunches. Two eyes seemed to shoot fire through the shadows. A big yellow moon was rolling across the reedy jungle to eastward. It was murky and dusty—plague weather—and the whole scene looked ghastly enough. There sat this mountain of deviltry, on his haunches, blazing away at us with eyes like rockets, and we could hear the crunch of bones like dry twigs. A coolie's just a coolie, but I raised my gun quicker than I'd ever raised it before. Too late at that. He bounded sideways; a big striped rubber ball he looked like as he made a rainbow curve among the reeds. The dense *moonja* grass opened like a hand with a million green fingers, and closed around him protectingly. No use blazing away then. His rush through the jungle sounded like a fiend of hell laughing and clapping his hands. In half a minute it had died away to a sneaking snicker, and the motion of the grassy sea became still as if the green waves had been suddenly frozen. The moon, ghastly pale, rolled across the east, and made just light enough to pick up a few pieces of coolie here and there.

Next day we counted heads when the file came for their rations of rice and grain. Four mouths short. I'd fed 'em too well to allow for desertion. When a man's missing in India, he's charged up to His Bengal Majesty.

All our coolies were warned—though they didn't need it. Most of 'em were scared knock-kneed, and you could see 'em get pale through their coating of Ganges slime, baked brown since their last holy bath. I've heard it said that the boa crushes its victims because its fangs would break off in their hide. Well, our coolies were mightily scared. Work went on slowly while they were talking over charms and amulets and the like. One of them knew an herb that, if you rubbed it over your body, would keep any tiger from touching you, though he'd had nothing but clover for a fortnight. When he'd dumped his last basket of earth, Soondar went to hunt for the herb. I really don't know whether he found it, or whether the tiger met him on the way out. Soondar didn't come back.

Two more went the next week. I began to think the tiger was opposed to the railroad concession. Maybe he had a growing family who'd be playing on the tracks; maybe we'd cut across his melon-patch, or scared the game off his preserve; maybe he just had an esthetic antipathy to the toot and smoke of the locomotive. He did his level best to stop the work. Two of our men deserted, but he got one, and the other came running back, making a noise like a forest full of peacocks. That stopped desertions, any way, but I began to think that I must get rid of that tiger somehow.

Pits and traps made him wary and wily. We beat the jungle upon elephants two or three times, but never saw so much as a stripe of his tail. Then the coolies were scared worse than ever. A real tiger, lying in wait to pounce upon them, was terrible enough; one that stalks invisible, a demon of the jungle, disappearing in a brown eddy of dust when you think you have him, knocked away the last prop of their courage, which they never had very much of. The English and the few Americans in India are full of pluck and devil-may-care, but it's all been starved out of the natives a thousand years ago, and they've been stuffed with superstition instead. It's the sun, I think. Look at the mists and vapors it raises from a swamp—don't you suppose it does the same in the bog of a brown-lidded brain?

The climax came after we'd lost eleven men, and I hatched a new scheme to settle Mr. Stripy. I told it to the *babu* overseer and accountant, who was to put it into jabberwe for the coolies. He looked at me queerly and said:

"It is misfortunate extremely, however the tiger is unpopular to be caught."

"I'm going to catch him or kill him before he eats you, Gallagher."

A spasm of fright spread over his whole face. He swallowed hard several times, then he spit out what was in his throat.

"This tiger," he said, "is not a merely tiger. Permit him accordingly in peace. I rejoiced the acquaintance, in extremity of Madras presidency, with Dhuleep Singh, an extremely scholar. He inform me of such circumstances that princes casually die and their souls transmogrify, and this tiger——"

"He's probably a prince, eh?" said I, and laughed at him. "I'd expect a prince to be more of an epicure than to eat raw coolie. Any way, I'll blow a hole into him big enough for the soul to crawl out and be a prince again."

The *babu*—I never knew his name; we called him Gallagher—drew a smudgy sleeve across his forehead and cowered down on a camp-stool. I saw that he was laboring with some esoteric communication, so I took down a few of our guns and inspected them awhile. Finally my patience was rewarded.

"You recognize the antique coolie which is continually murmurous in his beard. English say him lunatic; comprehensively the coolie venerate him holiness."

"Old Muttra, you mean?"

He nodded, and went on:

"Muttra make unanimous declaration that this no merely tiger. Soul of terrible prince in him recently transmogrify. Firstly he

appear one month preceding—firstly he appear. Muttra make unanimous declaration that terrible chief die just preceding, terrible prince which English was imagined long ago in extermination. He die recently preceding in temple cave where concealing twenty years from English. Prince's soul fly in tiger. Not merely tiger—soul of Nana Sahib."

"Nonsense Sahib!" said I. "If it is, all the better. One life and a plain hell weren't enough to square his account. His soul ought to be chopped up into mincemeat, and dragged with red-hot pincers through a thousand avatars, and a bit of it flung to broil in every one of your hundred or so hells. If it's Nana Sahib, I'm glad of it. I'll help a good work along."

Gallagher's face was as white as a frosty field by now. He conjured me, in every contortion that English grammar is capable of, to let my plan drop. He lugged out all the longest words in the Bengali-English Pocket Dictionary, but it was no use. He swore that the tiger could walk invisible at will; that it could climb trees and fly; that it could turn into a snake and hide under a stone—he swore it volubly and voluminously, but it was no use. I didn't mind a coolie or two, but after a while the coolies might run short, or Strip's family physician might order a change of diet, and I wasn't going to risk getting an invitation to dinner from him.

There was just one thing Gallagher said that impressed me—not then, but often since. Look at the fellow's eye as he lies there, winking wickedly at the fire. Gallagher said he had the evil eye. I'd seen it burn a hole through the shadow the night I nearly had a shot at him. But I laughed at Gallagher then—it's the best way to argue with a *babu*. Often since I've wondered, lying here on the sofa, he glaring at me cruelly, if there may not be something in that. Once I lay here, half dozing, and a green snake seemed to dart its head out of that eye. Don't smile—I hadn't touched a drop for months.

Well, I'd made up my mind to put my plan through, for all that Gallagher said. I picked out the trustiest of the rifles, and felt sure that with a fair shot I'd chase Nana Sahib into another *manvantara*. Nana hadn't had a snack for four days, and I was going to bait him with a nice, juicy coolie. About two hundred yards from the bungalow stood a fine young pippul tree, which commanded a clear view of the trek from the bungalow to the river. I climbed up into the heart of the tree—Gallagher below, trembling like its leaves, held the gun till I hauled it up. I straddled a comfortable branch, sent Gallagher back, and put in a couple of hours with a volume of my pocket Plutarch. The old duffer never interferes with a man's aim nor gets on his nerves. If I were secretary of war, every boy in

khaki should have a Plutarch to match. I had got to Minturnæ with Caius Marius, when I began to ask myself, "Man, darest thou kill Nana Sahib?" I concluded that his time had come, and put the book away.

From my perch in the branches I could cover a vast stretch of road and jungle. The tall grass moved like an army of green bayonets. Somewhere behind that mysterious curtain crouched the huge cat with basilisk eyes, hunger and hate goading him forward. The sun was very low, and the shadows very long. It was time for the assistant engineer to dangle my coolie bait. The fellow was to be sent to a wood-pile about half-way between the bungalow and my tree. It seemed to me he'd never start. Rodgers told me afterward that he had a faint glimmering of our purpose. But Rodgers was firm, and the coolie thought it was better to risk being eaten than to risk having nothing to eat. So he went.

I saw him come slowly and unsteadily down the road. The wind was favorable, blowing his scent the right way. No tiger with a nose could mistake a coolie scent. I watched the coolie; I watched the tall grass. My rifle was ready, my heart ticking like a watch. I had figured out that Stripy would come up a *nullah* that ran down to the river, on the side opposite his lair; that he wouldn't venture much nearer to the bungalow than my tree—not yet; and that he might peep through the lattice of his green covert.

My calculations were so correct that the results nearly paralyzed me. I was watching the coolie, watching the jungle, rifle cocked ready to raise, when a flash of green fire drew my eye to the edge of the jungle right opposite my perch. A flash of green fire darting toward me like a snake's tongue! I turned, and there was a pair of eyes, close to the ground, set in a gold and ebony head, with white tusks unsheathed in a soundless snarl. My rifle was pointing in that direction, and I let my eye travel along the barrel to meet one of those eyes. For a moment we looked into each other's souls, and I read in his all the hot hate and red rage of the jungle against man the interloper, all the craft and cruelty of the age-long warfare, the malice of murder and the lust of blood. Then I pulled the trigger.

The bark of the rifle was answered by a roar that keeled over my coolie, a hundred or so yards away. The tiger rose and fell forward, half of his brindled body out of the tall grass, his white jaws working convulsively. But his eye—I had to think of the *babu's* story about the evil eye. The bullet crashed through the left into the brain; the right eye rolled and glared—look at it now!—like a ruby dipped into hot blood. Every devilish passion seemed to burn there in a fiery furnace. There was so much satanic hate in that dying



gaze that I thought the eye would fly at me like a rifle-ball. It was like looking through a knot-hole into hell.

He lay there, in the gasp and grapple of death, three minutes before I could stir. Then half a dozen rushed from the bungalow with guns, picked up the coolie, who was scared half dead, and came to see what luck I'd had. Nana Sahib's head drooped as they came. It was as clean a shot as ever I made—right through the eye. He measured clear thirteen feet and seven inches—there he lies—from tips of ears to tip of tail. It's nearly ten years, but I've never yet forgotten the glare of his eye. Often, lying there on the couch, I seem to see it kindle with a new frenzy. Maybe Gallagher was right in that—maybe there's something in the evil eye.

#### THE CLAW OF THE CAT

The visitors were gone whom Major Belknap had regaled with the story of his tiger hunt, the trophy of which lay before the hearth in his library, its one eye, now dull and vindictive, glaring past the fire. The room seemed a shrine, and this incarnate cruelty its indwelling god. Teakwood boxes and brazen censers breathed forth exotic perfumes; huddling idols squatted toadlike in corners and leered from carnelian eyes; stuffed serpents, banded and striped like living agate, were coiled about the stalks of great lotus blooms, whose crimson congealed to black blood in the mystic half-lights. The languor and despair, the mystery and terror, of India brooded over the room.

Major Belknap, as he sank back upon the couch in the corner, seemed the one incongruity of this environment. Eight years home from India, good living had given him a florid, apoplectic color, though his manner was nervous and hunted, despite his favorite Plutarch. India had left its mark upon him—tropic suns had shriveled his skin and mystic exhalations drugged his soul. At times it all came back to him in a languorous pageant out of the past—all the majesty and envenomed beauty and weird horror of that vast and ancient land. Now, as he reclined there, the firelight licking his face fitfully, his mind turned backward and in a moment India was before him. He heard the shrill fifes and droning cymbals of myriad insect voices; bulbous temples rose like bubbles out of memory's misty deep; an irresistible and indefinable torpor crawled through his veins like a worm from Nirvana; the vast, shadowy arms of horrid night enfolded earth as in some giant cobra's coils; and over all this huge, festering phantasmagoria there glowed a sky of incandescent copper, a vast prison in which night seemed but a deeper dungeon. Such is India, the land of the *soma's* drowsy dreams, where in vast yellow coils the Ganges writhes toward the

sea—a sea jagged with island-mountains hurled by giant apes into the boiling waters. Temple caves, black and monstrous, gape to swallow the worshipper; but the true gods of this land, a tragic trinity, are Famine, Superstition, and Plague. Here it stretched in all its hideous beauty, before the half-shut eyes of Major Belknap.

Slowly this influence enveloped and permeated all his being. Only half conscious, his eyes only half open, he had no power to resist it. In vain he telegraphed to his leaden arms feeble volitions to uplift; the messages were dissipated before they reached the flaccid muscles. Then thought itself became weary and folded its wings; the brain turned into an ant-hill where thousands of strange tiny feet scurried in and out. Consciousness alone remained. Major Belknap felt himself drawn into a vast vortex teeming with horrors, into a gulf of bat-wings and fetid foam. He struggled, but his limbs moved not; he screamed, but not a sound crossed his lips. Oh, if he could but reach the bell-cord that hung two feet above his head! His eyes slowly traveled upward toward the tassel, when it was suddenly whisked away by an invisible hand. Then he knew that somebody besides himself was in the room.

Who? What?

These questions gradually intruded themselves into his stupor. The firelight, which licked his face feebly, like a dying dog, revealed nothing in the room but dim shapes and zigzag shadows. With a mighty explosion of will power he raised the lids of his eyes an infinitesimal bit, but he saw nothing save vague shapes and crooked shadows, and the tiger's baleful eye, glazed and glaring. Yet he was sure there was something or some one in the room. He strained his ears until he could hear the dying vibrations of a Bengali gong which he had tapped three hours before, until he could hear his eyelids creak as they sank back into their half-open state, until he could hear the microscopic particles of dust suspended in the air of every room falling like a hail of stones all about him. Then suddenly another sound took his attention; faint and fluttering at first, like the droning of a dream bee; rising to a distinct susurration like the whirl of a spinning wheel, or the song of a flame under the blow-pipe, or the roar of a cataract filtering murmurously through many miles. Then there came to him a swift intuition like a stunning blow.

What he heard was the purring of a gigantic cat.

It rose and fell; now nearer, now further; sometimes at his very ear, again from the corner of the bronze Buddha. Insinuating, soft, neither a hiss nor a roar, it had yet something malignant and terrifying in its weird monotone. Now rising, now falling, approaching, receding; sometimes filling the whole room with the tiny whirl of agile and tireless wheels, it became gradually a cruel torment, a

grindstone of sound pressed by some merciless power against the victim's ears.

But now the monotony was broken by another intrusion—a stealthy, cushioned tread, as if ponderous feet were stepping softly about the room. Sometimes they dragged, sometimes they paused; but ever again began that slow and cautious round, as if a huge but lissome body were driven about on some inscrutable quest, as if some hungry horror were footing the silence with impatient paws. The blood froze in the sleeper's veins; his heart stood still a moment, like a clock in an earthquake; then a second shock sent it off again furiously as he felt a hot breath brush his face. It was gone in a moment, and he thought he heard a low, fierce whine from the furthest corner.

All this time—it seemed hours—a thought had been slowly gathering in his brain. The innumerable ants, running briskly in and out, circled timidly about this thought, which grew, and grew, and grew. It was a tawny thought, golden-striped; a thought with a blazing eye, fierce and red. It grew, and grew, and grew.

The tiger!

Another volcanic eruption of will power, and the sleeper's head turned sideways toward the fireplace. There lay the rug, made of Nana Sahib's hide, still blinking wickedly at the fire. It was a hideous nightmare; he knew it now, and a deep sigh of relief welled up from his strangled heart. There lay the tiger's hide, tawny and striped; and the weird sounds had ceased utterly—the room was in a clammy silence. If only he could rouse sufficiently to reach the bell-rope!

What—is—that? In the center of the rug the tiger's skin seemed swelling upward, as if something were beneath it. The brindled hummock, convulsively twitching, rose higher and higher. The skin undulated like a miniature ocean, its billows writhing like black and yellow worms. It became a hideous clotted mass of bristling hair, twisted and turgid, surging and swaying. It rose higher and higher. Thus some slimy polyp comes like an island to the surface of the sea, upsets the luckless vessel in his course, and suns his vast bulk. The tiger-skin rose higher and higher, filled out further and further, till it towered, huge and fierce, before the hearth, tawny and terrible, with white jaws and gleaming tusks and blood-shot cornea.

Ah, that eye, filled with unutterable hate of man, glaring upon the sleeper with a fierce passion of malice. Hot poison seemed to rush from it like a stream of deadly lava. Ferocity and cunning darted forth flames forked and fanged, as the tongues of serpents. Devilish cruelty was in that look, and fiendish craft winged it onward. Sheaves of fire, intense red and livid green, flashed and flared; rockets and lightnings mingled in a fusillade of flaming hate,

as the abominable thing rose to its full height and fixed its fearful gaze upon the sleeper.

Now it swayed forward, and sank down to a crouching posture, ready to spring. A purple smoke seemed to come from its nostrils. Its ears were laid back, bringing out the bullet-shaped contour of the head. The jaws were opened in a soundless snarl, showing its tusks like a row of sickles. A tremor of rage and fury passed over the supple body, and was lost in a savage lashing of the tail. This was a creature beautiful but cruel, horror incarnate, the demon of the jungle!

As it crouched to spring, the sleeper became suddenly conscious of his fearful peril. But his limbs were frozen in terror—he could not raise a finger. His tongue seemed soldered down, his throat choked with hot sand. His finger-nails were driven deep into the palms of his clenched hands. In his anguish he bit upon his tongue till a stream of hot blood gushed from his compressed lips. Yet nothing availed to waken him.

Then the evil thing lurched forward and sprang upon him.

He felt something snap and give way within him—the cord, the chain, the screw, or whatever it was, that held his faculties fast. His arm went up like a flail, and his bleeding palm clutched the bell-rope's tassel. With the jangling of the bell a wild, marrow-freezing shriek shook all the house, so that every one in it leaped to his feet. At the same time the hurtling horror descended upon the major; he felt its breath scorching his face, its eye poured vitriol into his brain, its claws sank deep into his shoulder, and the terrible gleaming tusks were sheathed in his throat.

#### FROM THE MORNING PAPER

A mysterious tragedy cut short the life of our well-known citizen, Major Belknap, at 4.35 yesterday afternoon. The Major, a retired civil engineer, who spent many years in India, had parted from some friends only half an hour before his death. He had been in the best of spirits, and told some of his hunting stories of the days when he superintended railway work in the Madras presidency. He had been a great hunter and a sure shot, and trophies of his prowess filled every room of the Belknap mansion. At the hour mentioned yesterday afternoon, his niece and the servants were startled by a blood-curdling shriek from the library. Rushing in, they found the major breathing his last. He had torn a bell-rope down in his dying agony; and had severely bitten his tongue. His shirt-front was saturated with blood.

Dr. M. B. Welles, who was hastily summoned, declared it to be a case of heart failure, due to some terrible shock or fright.

Just what could have caused this dreadful paroxysm is not apparent, for, aside from the bitten tongue, there was no wound upon the body, and the condition of the room gave no evidence of the presence of an intruder, nor of a struggle of any kind. Further details may be brought to light at the inquest, which will be held at 1.30 to-day.

# THE CRITIC

*By John Trevor Custis*

HE was a student of music, of literature, and of art.

Yet he never was known to compose a song, or write a verse, or mould in clay the petal of a rose.

He was a Critic.

He heard a great musician play. A man at his elbow whispered, "Wonderful!"

And he said, "Yes, but there was one note—one note——"

A literary giant wrote a book that stirred the pulses of the world.

"It is a marvel of literature," they said.

Said the Critic, "But he spoiled it all in the climax. That was not true to life."

He stood before a painting that represented the life-work of a master.

The world held its breath and sobbed.

"Almost—almost," said the Critic.

The musician, the writer, and the artist met.

They lauded each other's efforts and, touching glasses, drank confusion to the Critic.

"He is no genius," they said, "and by what authority does he dissect our work, while the world applauds it?"

They met the Critic one day.

"The Eternal Mind fashioned men of genius," they told him, "and from the material that was left a critic was evolved."

The Critic laughed.

The Critic had a friend who was neither a genius nor a critic.

"You are a genius, as well as they," said the friend. "Once, in secret, you wrote a few bars of music. They would have made you famous. But you tore up the notes and ground them under your heel.

"Once you began to write a story; when the first pages were finished you laid them away in a drawer and turned the key—and they are there yet, yellow with age.

"Once you painted a marvellous picture—it was almost completed when you slashed the canvas with your palette knife in a dozen places."

The Critic was silent.



"Why?"

"Because I am a Critic. Because I have the fatal gift of seeing my mistakes. Because, not being a genius, I cannot hide them from myself and read success in the world's applause.

"As a Critic I can stimulate, ridicule, or shame men of genius to strive toward perfection. I am the avenger of their unsatisfied aspirations. But what I do for them I must do for myself—and more. When I begin my own task I am my own Critic—merciless and unsparing—and at last in despair I throw down my pen and my brush and am nothing again—only a Critic.

"Yet there are moments when hope returns, and I maintain a belief in the possibility of a perfect work. So I begin again, and yet again.

"And some day——"

The Critic lived out his life. And he died as he had lived.

For at the end he grappled all night with Death. He fought it off until dawn. But he never saw the Day.



## THE MORO MAN

(A Squad Room Ballad)

BY ALFRED DAMON RUNYON

TH' Moro is a cur'ous bug, a cur'ous bug is he;  
 He builds his house on little stilts out o' a bamboo tree;  
 An' when he's tired o' livin' there an' wants ter move his  
 shack,  
 He makes his wife put down her wash an' moves it on her back!

### CHORUS:

But you mustn't hurt th' Moro, boys,  
 Or take away his gun,  
 For if you do you'll surely hear  
 From 'em at Washington.  
 You mustn't hurt th' Moro, boys;  
 He's jes' a little wild.  
 Oh, treat th' Moro gently, boys!  
 He's Uncle Sammy's child!

Th' Moro is a cheerful cuss; he never works at all;  
He sits an' smokes a cigarette from springtime into fall;  
He ain't so fond o' cleanliness—he ruther likes th' dirt—  
An' all th' clo'es he has ter wear is jes' a little shirt!

Th' Moro is a peaceful cuss; he never likes ter fight—  
“*Barail*” is th' Moro's word from mornin' until night.  
He likes ter take a shot at us, but jes' for practice' sake—  
Oh, do not hurt th' Moro, boys; you might keep him awake!

Th' Moro is a funny cuss, for when we gits our pay  
He sells us anything he's got—an' steals it right away.  
He pots us from th' underbrush or whacks us with a knife—  
But you mustn't hurt th' Moro, boys, his children or his wife!

Th' Moro is a friendly cuss; it's jes' his little way  
Ter shoot at us through half th' night—an' ginur'ly all day;  
We catch him after chasin' him until we a'most faint;  
He's friendly then till next day when—the chances is he ain't!

## CHORUS:

Oh, do not hurt th' Moro, boys;  
He's Uncle Sammy's child;  
An' when you speak be sure your tones  
Are soft an' low an' mild;  
Oh, do not mind his knife, my boys;  
He's jes' a little riled;  
An' do not hurt th' Moro, boys—  
He's Uncle Sammy's child!



# BUM O'REILLY'S LAST CHANCE

*The sixth of the "Miss Lucy" stories—a series of humorous child sketches, each complete in itself*

*By Lucy Copinger*

IT was Bum O'Reilly's hopeless devotion to Marie Schaefer that was his final undoing. She was so clean that she smelt of soapsuds, while Bum was the dirtiest boy in Class A. His pug-nacious temperament had made him a general nuisance, and his irregular attendance would have long ago landed him in the clutches of the truant officer had it not been for the foolish and sheltering affection that Miss Lucy had for this Celtic incorrigible, whose hair was of the same cheerful hue as her own, and whose loveliness was so irresistible. At last his misdeeds culminated in the bestowal of a dead snake—souvenir of a Fresh Air outing—upon Marie, who, finding it in her desk, ungratefully screamed herself red in the face. That dinner-time Miss Lucy had just made herself a cup of good smelling coffee and had spread out her lunch—a particularly toothsome one of chicken and other delicacies—when she was summoned to an interview with Mrs. Schaefer—an unpleasant interview, which lasted until the beginning of the afternoon session. At its conclusion the hungry Miss Lucy, who had a weakness for chicken, wrathfully gathered her lunch together and went to the principal.

"Will you give me one of those committal papers?" she said. "I am going to send O'Reilly to the Incorrigible School. I'll go this afternoon and get his mother's signature."

The principal looked regretful.

"Has he had his last chance?" he asked. "Can't you give him one more?"

"No, I can't," said Miss Lucy righteously; "and I'm going to tell his mother just what he is, you see if I don't."

So it was that after school that afternoon Miss Lucy walked down the street, her lunch in one hand and the committal paper in the other. Bum, with a cheerfulness too unassumed to be impudent, walked beside her. Her wrath had waxed with her hunger, and it was with unusual severity that she stopped Bum's obliging explanation of

the difference between a horn agate and a "nigger louse," while in the silence that ensued she rehearsed to herself the list of his iniquities that she had prepared for Mrs. O'Reilly.

Bum, who was one of eleven children, did not live in the tenement district, but among even more squalid surroundings. A railroad ran in front of the neglected little buildings, with that peculiar look of grimy dirtiness characteristic of such neighborhoods. The house in front of which Bum finally stopped was even more dilapidated than the others. One shutter was gone, the other hung gaily on a solitary hinge, the bell was pulled out, and the door knob had vanished. There was a very dirty lace curtain at the window, through which Miss Lucy saw a large, fat face watching her. The next moment the door was opened, and she found herself overwhelmed by a large woman in a gaudy red wrapper and somehow pushed into a crooked little rocking chair in a dirty little parlor. Then Mrs. O'Reilly, fat and frowsy-headed, with the humorous blue eyes of her race, sank upon the sofa, the only remaining piece of furniture in the room.

"The hivens be praised!" she cried delightedly. "If I didn't seen ye coming down the street, and I was jest saying to meself as who's the handsome young lady, and thin I sez, 'If it ain't me own Jimmie along wid her!' and thin I knowed ye right away. 'The divil if it ain't Missis Loosey,' I sez, 'and me widout me corsets!'"

At the close of this dramatic recital Mrs. O'Reilly smoothed down her voluminous person apologetically, and then mechanically slapped at one of the three very small and very dirty children, apparently triplets, who had crawled out from somewhere and, as she talked, wriggled over her.

In spite of the flattery of this reception, Miss Lucy was untouched.

"I have come to tell you about James," she began severely.

"Don't ye say a word till ye're good and rested," interrupted Mrs. O'Reilly thoughtfully. "Not that ye're looking a bit done up. Nobody'd think ye was a school teacher, ye're that fresh and young, jest like a girl, wid yer pretty hair."

This was Miss Lucy's most vulnerable point. She blushed from pleasure, and, finding it necessary to harden her heart, she tightened her hold upon the committal paper and broke in hastily upon Mrs. O'Reilly.

"I have come to tell you about James," she began again.

"Ain't it the divil about that boy?" Mrs. O'Reilly here inquired, with kindly enthusiasm. "He's that fond of ye he don't do nothing but talk about ye, and ivery cint he gits it's the same thing. 'I'll git something for Missis Loosey,' he sez. 'There ain't nothing too good for her, there ain't.'"

The ungrateful recipient of stale buns and chewing gum remem-

bered these offerings guiltily, but with a heightened sense of the imperativeness of her duty.

"I am very fond of James, personally," she said, "but as a teacher——"

"Oh, ye needn't tell me ye'll be teaching long!" cried Mrs. O'Reilly, coquettishly rolling her eyes upon Miss Lucy. "Not wid yer pretty face. I know what ye'll be up to soon!"

At this delightful prophecy Miss Lucy found it necessary to rally all her moral forces. If these had failed, the memory of the untasted chicken might yet have carried her through, but at this crucial point Mrs. O'Reilly suddenly arose, sliding the triplets gently to the floor.

"But what's the matter wid me?" she cried. "Letting ye set here wid yer throat that dry! Jimmie, ye divil, run and git me the picher quick. It'll freshen ye up a bit, and I won't mind a drop meself." As she spoke, Mrs. O'Reilly, taking the pitcher and putting on a dirty sunbonnet, hurried out.

Miss Lucy, left alone, looked apprehensively at Bum.

"Where is she going?" she asked.

"Oh, it's jest to the corner," said Bum reassuringly.

"But—but—I don't like milk," said Miss Lucy.

"Milk?" echoed Bum, with a grin. "Who drinks milk? It's a picher of beer she's after fer ye."

At this Miss Lucy sank helplessly back in the chair, and in a few moments Mrs. O'Reilly returned. There was something in the pitcher with a foam on it, and, ignoring Miss Lucy's protests, she thrust a thick glass into her hand and filled it.

"There!" she exclaimed hospitably. "I couldn't be letting ye set there widout a little bit to wet yer throat."

Miss Lucy looked at the glass curiously. Her upbringing had been of the strictest, and never before had she been so near to anything more bibulous than lemonade.

"Oh, thank you," she murmured weakly, "but I'm afraid I cannot drink it."

This remonstrance, however, did not reach Mrs. O'Reilly, who was already engaged in refilling her own glass. Again Miss Lucy looked at the beer. She drew it a little nearer and smelt it. To completely refuse Mrs. O'Reilly's well meant hospitality would be unpardonably rude, and, besides, it smelt very nice. She looked guiltily around the room, but no warning figure of principal or superintendent was there to tell her that it was not wise for unseasoned and lunchless young teachers to look upon that which was amber. Before she knew it, with the many gulps and chokes of an amateur, she had emptied half the glass and was declining guiltily Mrs. O'Reilly's generous insistence to have "jest a smack more."



"There ain't nothing like it," Mrs. O'Reilly declared in a voice that had grown even more suave and bland. "Jest let me git a few beers in me, and it cheers me up fine."

To this Miss Lucy was unable to reply with other than a vague smile, for she was suddenly occupied in overcoming a feeling she had experienced once before upon the occasion of a Sunday school picnic, when a whirling razzle-dazzle had lured her too long. Also, to her surprise, the triplets had bewilderingly changed to a quartet.

"Yis, as I'm telling ye," Mrs. O'Reilly rambled smoothly on, "there ain't nobody but ye fer me little Jimmie here. He jest loves ye."

Miss Lucy had given up trying to count the triplets, and a pleasant, heart-warming glow had begun to steal over her, melting her cold pedagogical severity. She smiled affectionately at Bum. What a dear little fellow he was, and how she would miss him!

"And there ain't no teecher up at the school like ye—not even the principal hisself," declared Mrs. O'Reilly unctuously.

At this unfortunate reference Miss Lucy made a herculean attempt to regain her scholastic dignity and her vanished wrath. She looked at the committal paper and at her untasted lunch.

"I want to tell you about James," she began again desperately, only to find that the mathematical effort to reduce the triplets to their proper trinity had resulted in a mental confusion, and she could not remember any of the carefully rehearsed list of Bum's misdeeds.

In the meantime Mrs. O'Reilly had grown suddenly lachrymose. "But it ain't long he'll be having ye," she sniffed. "It ain't long ye'll be teaching, fer ye'll be gitting a beau any day and gitting married, ye will."

Under ordinary circumstances this prospect would have cheered Miss Lucy up wonderfully, but she at once became sympathetically sad.

"I will never leave James," she declared faithfully. "He is the best boy in my class, and I love to teach him."

At this declaration Mrs. O'Reilly dissolved completely into tears and wept promiscuously and copiously upon the triplets.

"He's the son of me heart," she wept, "and me nothing but a poor widdy."

At this announcement Miss Lucy was surprised, as she had a recent recollection of Mr. O'Reilly, the red-headed and healthy driver of a garbage cart, and she did not know that the killing off of her spouse was Mrs. O'Reilly's usual course when, to use her own phrase, she had a "few beers in her." On this occasion she was so overcome with the pathos of her sudden widowhood that Miss Lucy thought it was time to go home. A few minutes later she found herself walking up the street with a memory of Mrs. O'Reilly's affectionate and damply

greasy farewell, and a last triumphant effort to count the triplets, who had again returned to their original number.

"What was the matter with me?" she murmured to herself. She had forgotten her cherished lunch, but she still grasped the committal paper. She opened it wonderingly, and the cold legality of its terms rose up and stood accusingly before her.

"How did it ever happen?" she wondered. "And what in the world was the matter with those children, anyhow?"

The next morning the principal came into her room.

"Well, how about the case of O'Reilly?" he asked.

"Oh," said Miss Lucy shamelessly, already a promising disciple of Mrs. O'Reilly's art, "when I thought it over I decided—as I find I generally do decide—that your advice was, as it always is, best. I'm going to give him another chance."

Man-like, the principal was secretly greatly flattered at this speech, but, to conceal his pleasure, "The changeable feminine!" he remarked with a smile that he vainly tried to make cynical.



## LET ME INTO THE DARKNESS AGAIN

BY GERTRUDE HUNTINGTON M'GIFFERT

IT has come at last—  
Our meeting!  
This my dream through all the past—  
The lonely unshared years,  
The yearning tears,  
And now—our greeting!  
How I have pictured it—my hour supreme—  
Poor pitiful dream!  
And now—I would forget  
Our meeting—  
This cold, strange farce—this greeting.  
I would have back the dream,  
The lonely unshared years,  
The yearning tears.  
Oh, God! I would forget  
That we have met!



"IT has always been a mystery to me why Herod had John the Baptist's head cut off to satisfy the whim of a dancing girl," said Duncan. "After seeing Imperio dance, I quite understand it. Moreover, if the dancing was up to hers, I don't feel sure that in the king's place I should not have been more generous and given the heads of half a dozen blooming prophets."

"I have never seen dance any girl as the Imperio," Don Anastasio exclaimed. "More gracious; great spirit in her *figure*" (he meant "face"); "always smiling."

"It's half dramatic, half religious—like David's dancing before the Ark, or like the Pyrrhic dance of the ancient Greeks, perhaps—who knows?"

"May be," Don Anastasio agreed. "I have not seen La Davide, nor the other dancer you speak of. In Spain the dance is according to the region. In Madrid they have the *madriena*, in Seville the *sevilliana*, in La Mancha the *manchega*, in Valencia the *tango*, the *jota*, and so on."

We were waiting in the big studio while Imperio changed her dress behind Villegas's great picture, "The Death of the Matadore," that fills one end of the room. She had arrived a few minutes before with her mother, dressed like any other young Andaluza, in a modest white frock, almost childish in its cut, a thin black lace mantilla over her thick, short black hair, curiously arranged in curls on either side of her face, held in place by a pair of tortoise-shell combs set with turquoises. As she passed I gave her a pair of crimson peonies, bought from the old flower-seller who sits at the corner of the *Passeje del Alhambra*; these evidently influenced her choice of costume from the studio "properties" in the closet behind the picture, for when, an apparition in red, she flashed around the corner of the huge canvas, she wore a scarlet moreen petticoat, a red crape *manton de Manilla* skilfully draped about her lithe figure, a small matadore hat, and the peonies stuck like

two crimson rosettes in the curls on either side the perfect oval of her face.

The boy with the guitar began to play, the other to sing—to chant, rather—a wailing, droning *tango* with the strangest twists and quavers. The chorus, half a dozen Andalusian women, with Imperio's mother as leader, clapped their hands, marking time. Imperio sat waiting till she caught the right cadence, then, with a crack of the castanets on her fingers, sprang to the dance.

"Look at her hands—her arms! Ah! did you see that movement? How can a thing of flesh and blood be so flexible?" whispered Duncan, a long, freckled man from Inverness, perhaps the most inflexible Scot I ever saw.

"These people dance with the entirety of the *corpe*," Anastasio explained; "the French, with toes, feet, and legs only. The base of all our Spanish dances is oriental. This is rather correct; any lady may see it."

Don Anastasio was at school in England some time back in the middle of the last century. He speaks the language fluently, if quaintly—is never at loss for a word, even if forced to coin or borrow it.

"A pythoness, a Bacchic priestess filled with divine frenzy," Duncan maundered on.

Imperio was transformed; her eyes were live emeralds, her face so intense that all other faces seemed expressionless in comparison. The combs soon dropped from her hair, which loosened and clung about her face and neck; the color surged to her pale cheeks. As her little, arched feet trod the short, abrupt measures of the *tango*, they had the same sort of scornful touching of the ground that the splendid Arab barbs have when they are "showing off" of an afternoon in the park of the Buen Retiro. With each step Imperio turned her proud head rhythmically from side to side. The castanets were soon thrown away; thumbs and fingers snapping above her wild mane marked the time better!

"What does this dance express to you?" whispered Duncan—his eyes never left Imperio.

"Pride above everything—pride of race, youth, strength, and of supreme beauty."

"More, more! Love, life, birth, death, all the mysteries of human existence, are expressed in Imperio's dancing," Duncan rambled on, while Imperio, with the reserve of the true artist, led us step by step up the heights of feeling. The impatient tapping of the feet as she took the short paces ended with a sudden rising in the air, when she seemed to tower above us all, above her former self.

"*Andar!*" cried the chorus.

"*Ollé ollé!*" shouted Duncan.

After a brief interlude the music changed, became more suave, less staccato. Imperio's face changed with it, grew sweeter, gentler. Her slender arms, her tiny, sensitive hands with the tremulously moving fingers, were raised alternately above her head and drawn down on either side of her face with a gesture that seemed like the weaving of a charm. This figure ended most unexpectedly; Imperio suddenly fell to her knees, the head moving from side to side, the eyes looking down, the gay snapping of the fingers accompanying every movement, till, with a sudden fierce, passionate gesture of the hand, the small red hat was sent spinning across the studio, the head was thrown back with a gesture so supremely spirited that it brought Duncan to his feet and set the rest clapping, stamping, and crying, "*Ollé ollé!*"

As she sat resting, I said to Imperio: "Who taught you to dance? Your mother, was it not?"

"Nobody!" she exclaimed proudly. "I taught myself; I have danced since I was eight years old."

I looked at Don Anastasio. "It may be true," he said. "She see her mother dance every day since she were born. She imitate her dancing as her walking, but is not conscious; each of them have their own manner."

"That dance is as old as Eve," said Villegas. "Imperio adds to it her own personality—and it is new again!"

"That's it," said Duncan; "she's immortally young and immemorially old at the same time. The face is young; the eyes, the dance, have come down from the ages. Look at that sudden spring—now's she a ferocious young tigress from the jungle, a minute ago she was laughing like a happy child, in another moment she will be brooding like the world spirit."

Don Anastasio reminded us that in a gypsy's house in Granada (a cave cut in the living rock of the hillside above the old town, facing the red towers of the Alhambra and the eternal snows of the Sierra Nevadas) we had seen similar dancing by some old women and little girls.

"Those aged crones, those children, were like history and prophecy," said Duncan. "Imperio is life! She's the joy of living. Life calls to life, the blood in my veins keeps time to her dancing. I believe she draws power from us—it is all give and take in this world. She gives us youth, and the dance, the natural, primitive expression of the lust of life. We give her in return the elixir of our sympathy. She is a vision of the youth of the world, and I love her!"

The dance over, after the final pose, when she stood for an instant, her imperious head thrown back, her scarlet lips parted.



the breath coming in gasps between her small white teeth, her right hand tossed above her head, the left pointing down to the triumphant feet, Imperio went and sat down beside her mother.

Villegas's big studio, and J.'s smaller studio leading from it, had been cleaned and put in the most miraculous order for the *fiesta*. Pablo, the olive-skinned, sunken-eyed Catalan servant, had spread two tables in the inner studio: one for us, with tea, transparent bread and butter, and macaroons; the other with substantial sandwiches, Bologna sausage, solid loaves of cake, *agua vida*, and *manzanilla* (a thin white wine) for the performers. I had refused tea and the other things; Imperio, seeing that I was not eating, came towards me, holding between a small thumb and finger, and gravely offering to me, a thin slice of Bologna sausage. After the feast, when we returned to the big studio, the tea table looked very much as it did before we went in; a few macaroons, one or two airy slices of bread and butter, had disappeared. The larger table looked as if a cyclone had struck it, and a swarm of locusts descended upon it; of food and drink 'twas swept as bare as my hand!

Next we had songs, the long drawn, chanted *malaganas* and folk songs of Andalusia. This music has more of the east than the west in it—like so much else in Spain, where every art and every craft is enriched by the legacy of the Moor. At first it may seem too monotonous, then slowly, surely, the spell works! Eloi, Imperio's brother, a youth of seventeen, with deep, passionate eyes and a certain look of Imperio, threw back his head and wailed out verse after verse, each stanza ending with a long, vibrating note like a sigh. The music was full of surprises. Now it carried us all across Spain to a garden in Morocco, where, under the light of the stars, we had once sat and listened to Moorish musicians playing on strange instruments, to a Moorish singer who mourned, rather than sang, the heart-breaking "Lament for Granada." The next song carried us north to Baireuth, and to the great theatre there—for Wagner knew this music, and borrowed from it as he borrowed music from fire, from water, from thunder, from all elemental things. The sympathetic circle was complete—Eloi played upon our heart strings. Of all the company, the two famous Andalusians, Villegas and Imperio, felt it most; he seemed to forget us all—who knows what he saw with those eyes that saw nothing near him? Imperio felt it differently; she was on fire to translate it to us, to draw us into the inner circle of the full meaning. She repeated the words slowly at the end of each couplet. When I did not quite understand, she grew furiously impatient and said she must teach us all Spanish. She was delighted when I said I would write down the words; here is a free translation of the stanzas Imperio liked best.

This I tell to you: to see my mother, I would give the finger from my hand—but the finger I need the most to use!

My stepmother beat me because I prayed for my mother; my father turned me out of doors. Where can I go to be a little warm?

There was a shadow walked behind me. It was the spirit of my mother. It said to me, "To give thee life, I gave my life!"

"*Ay de mí!*" cried Imperio, and shivered.

"I wish that I had lips of caramel, that I might kiss thee well!" sang Eloi in lighter vein. Imperio laughed at this, and shook the short curls back from her face as she murmured: "*Valgame Dios!*"

I am in prison on account of a bad woman. Tell the jailer when I am dead not to unbar the door, for even dead I would not see her!

"Oh, *dolor!*" moaned Imperio. "Give me the guitar. Now I will sing!

"*Ay Sevilla, la poblacion mas hermosa del mundo entiero, la ciudad que yo amo mas que mi madre*" ("Ah, Seville, town the most handsome in the entire world, city I love better than my mother"), sang Imperio, with much more, all in praise of the city of which the Germans say, "To whom God loves, he gives a house in Seville."

"Will Imperio dance to-night?" I asked Don Anastasio.

"Always, at the Kursaal after middle-night. How a pity you cannot go, Missis! There are some French and English performers would not please ladies; they are not as Imperio. Duncan goes at the Kursaal many times. He likes that ooman very much. I say him he must not place his fonds on her."

"She's still more than half a child," said Duncan. "Ask her about her doll. Her mother tells me she sometimes takes it and plays with it on rainy days." Then, turning to the mother, he asked: "Don't you think she dances better at the studio than at the Kursaal?"

"*Clarol!*" the mother smiled and nodded as she agreed with him.

"Of course she dances better here," said Villegas, "because it's free, it's for the love of the thing; it's always the same—money only buys second best. There is no question of payment here; we are all *Sevilliani*; we are born in the same parish, baptized from the same font in the old Cathedral under the shadow of the Giralda. When I first came to Madrid at sixteen to copy Velasquez, Imperio's mother was the most famous dancer in Spain. How is it with you now? You have not forgotten the *baile flamenca*, the one you danced at the palace before Queen Isabella?"

"Something of the dance I remember; it was the *cachucha*."

"Well, show us how it went."

"Yes, little mamma, show us how you danced before the queen," said Imperio kindly.

The grave, pale woman looked at her son, he nodded, and the circle reformed in an instant; we in our seats, the chorus in theirs, Imperio beside me, clapping her hands with the others, shouting "*Hala! Animal!*" The old dancer rose with a curious movement all her own (as Anastasio said, each of them has her own manner), springing with what seemed to be one action from her seat to the first pose of the *cachucha*. Then, with a noble solemnity, she gave us the same dances—only not with the same spirit—that Imperio had given. She bore herself with the most splendid and magnificent dignity, as became the mother of a family, while little, saucy Imperio clapped her hands and encouraged, and the boy looked tenderly at her with eyes that were her very own. The gentle mother, so long relegated to the second place, so modestly ignoring the fact that she once held the position Imperio holds to-day, danced and rejoiced in the tardy attention and applause of the company.

"Show them my portrait, *Maestro*," said Imperio, pointing to a big, veiled picture on the easel. Villegas dropped the veil and showed us a second Imperio, standing with one hand raised above her head, one held behind her back, the red matadore hat upon her short curls, the emerald fire in her eyes. Duncan stared at the picture, then at Imperio, once more a demure child in a white frock as she was when she came into the studio—save for an added touch of vermillion in the lips, of carmine in the cheeks, of emerald fire in the eyes.

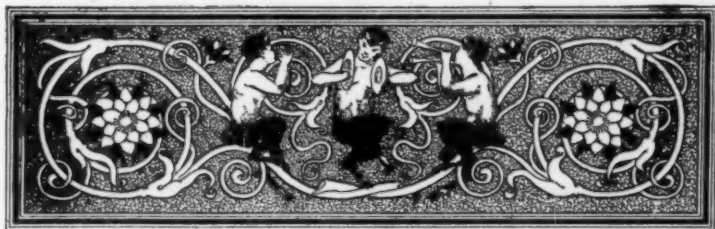
"Is it Imperio?" asked the girl.

"It is Imperio!" said Duncan; then to Villegas: "Wonderful! *Maestro*, it's even better than you can know. You have caught the most precious thing in the Spain of your time and stamped it on this canvas to be the world's delight as long as the threads of canvas hold together."

Villegas rubbed his fingers over the portrait. "This needs scraping down a little and repainting, the color is too thick—there is too much. Perhaps I have caught a little of her spirit; she has something none of the rest of them have—something virginal, a sort of fierce chastity. When she falls in love and marries (she's honest gypsy blood) it will be finished, she will be like another. You have seen, and I have tried to paint, the first dancer of Spain in her flower."

"*Hasta luego!*" said Imperio, putting her little hand in mine and smiling brightly up at me. She bowed formally to the others,

and ran up to the *Maestro*, who patted her as if she had been a child. When she was gone, Duncan picked up one of the crimson peonies from the floor and put it in a vase of water; Villegas dropped the veil before the picture. We were all silent for a few moments. Youth, and all it had lent us, had passed out of the studio.



## THE CARNIVAL OF VENICE

*(At the Theatre)*

BY JANE BELFIELD

A WOMAN stood beneath the light  
In crimson robe, with shoulders white,  
And played as with a master's might  
"The Carnival of Venice."

She played it high, she played it low—  
She scraped my heartstrings with her bow!  
And loud and soft and fast and slow—  
"The Carnival of Venice."

The light from palace windows streamed,  
And on the marble stairways gleamed;  
And had I lived—or had I dreamed  
A Carnival in Venice?

Ah, could I reach it without rue—  
Know night and stars and flood and—you—  
Then all my dreaming would come true—  
"The Carnival of Venice"!

# THE SAPPHIRE RING

*By Eleanor Ecob*

THE only two people in the world whom Lou Trevor really disliked were Mrs. Frank Biddle and Steve Morris; hence it seemed "just her luck" to involve herself in the most hopeless of scrapes with this particular two.

That summer her parents were travelling, while she was staying with an aunt whose country place was in Lou's home village. The aunt was giving a lawn party, and in the front rank came Mrs. Biddle, the village bureau of information, quick of eye and tongue, and with an imagination fearful and wonderful. She was popularly known as Sherlock Holmes; and, indeed, she was a gifted woman. One never knew, in talking to her, which careless word would be seized upon and made the basis of some ingenious fiction which was later circulated through the expectant village.

At first sight Mrs. Biddle rushed up to her, and, seizing both hands, dragged her off to a bench beneath the trees for a private interview.

"Heaven help me!" thought Lou. "She is going to pump me. I wonder what it is this time?" The girl knew well enough that she was clay in the potter's hands.

Under the stimulus of this hated presence, she felt capable of doing or saying anything wild, if only she could startle Mrs. Biddle out of her assured complacency.

For five wretched minutes Lou talked with carefully guarded speech about various matters of interest in the village, but when the conversation drifted to the Morris boys, out in Arizona, she breathed a sigh of relief. Safe topic at last! The Morrises had spent two summers in the village, it is true, but that was some time ago. Lou had never known them well, and had disliked one of them, Steve, intensely. What possible pitfall in talking about them? She grew quite cordial. No, she did not know whether Steve was the elder, had not heard of Geof's recent illness; in fact, had not heard from them at all.

There was a moment's pause, in which Mrs. Biddle looked at her understandingly, indulgently. Then, "I heard, Miss Trevor," she said, "that you and Mr. Steve were engaged. Would you mind



very much telling me whether it is true? But I am sure it must be, or you wouldn't be so innocent about it."

A bolt from the blue! Steve Morris, the abhorred above all others! Lou's blood boiled. She could not kill the woman right there on her aunt's lawn, but, at least, she would take her down a peg. "Why, yes," she said coolly; "I thought every one knew about it. Of course it isn't announced yet, but——"

But Mrs. Biddle was gone, after one look which was balm to Lou's angry heart—a look of amazement that she had not guessed nearer the truth, of chagrin that she had not guessed sooner. Lou sank down on the bench and laughed till she cried. But she did not laugh when she looked up and saw Mrs. Biddle buzzing her way through the throng of guests near the house. Everywhere behind her, people were smiling, chatting, looking in her direction. To-morrow the story would be all over the village. What had she done! Engaged herself to a strange man! What would her parents say, and the rest of her family? What would the strange man say when *he* heard? The enormity of it all came over her with sickening realization. People would be sure to write and congratulate him; and then——!

Lou shut her eyes and tried not to think any more. But something had to be done. Her first impulse was to pursue Mrs. Biddle and tell her that it was all a falsehood. But her pride rose in revolt. What a story to send around the village after the other one! Besides, no one would believe her. They would only think that she had let the truth escape her, and was trying to conceal it with a most transparent fiction. It was out of the question. She would have to let the whole thing go until these people were out of the way and she could think and plan in earnest.

She went back to the guests and talked with the steadiness of a machine all the rest of the afternoon. After an age they began to go. Each one shook hands with her and smiled the smile. She knew what it meant because she had smiled it herself, before. She would never do it again. Nobody said anything to her about her engagement, however, and she began to take courage. Evidently Mrs. Biddle had told people not to say anything about it, as it was not announced. Perhaps they wouldn't write to Mr. Morris at all. Vain hope! She knew that she could never get the horrible engagement broken off before he heard about it. Still, she spent a gloomy evening and half the night in feverish revolution of the problem, the thought of him possessing her, torturing her. How he would despise her! And she couldn't blame him if he did. Her humiliation was unbounded. When at last she fell asleep, it was to a long series of nightmares, in all of which poor Steve figured as villain-in-chief.

But in the morning she was quite calm. She wrote a long letter of explanation to her parents, and, after breakfast with her unsuspecting aunt, started for the village to reconnoitre. She was very angry—with herself somewhat, but chiefly with Steve. It was all his fault. If it hadn't been he, she would never have fibbed to Mrs. Biddle, and if it had been any other man, she would not have cared, any way. She would only have had to explain and laugh it off. What a joke it would have made, too! Her ancient dislike for Steve suddenly redoubled, and, though she had never quite understood before, she saw now why she had always hated him: it was his horrible gravity. He took everything she did so seriously, and treated her in consequence like a small and very foolish child. He never acted that way to any one else. Lou knew that with other people he was as jolly and agreeable as the gayest of them. He seemed to like every one but herself; and she was honest enough to admit that this was one of the main causes of her dislike of him. She was used to instantaneous conquest.

The thought of confessing her deed to this objectionable character filled her with wrath, but by the time she reached the village she had almost made herself believe that she wouldn't care much. What was his opinion to her, any way? She would write, frankly explain, and tell him that she would break the engagement as soon as a decent length of time had elapsed. If he were angry, well——! She shrugged her shoulders.

In the village a youthful acquaintance ran up to her. "Oh, Lou!" she cried ecstatically, "I have just heard about your engagement, and I think it is simply fine. Steve is such a splendid fellow! Aren't you the luckiest girl!"

Lou's cheeks flamed, and, muttering an assent, she escaped up the street. But this was only the beginning. Every one she met rushed at her with congratulations, telling her how pleased they were and singing Steve's praises. In spite of her annoyance, Lou could hardly repress her amusement. It seemed that Steve's fiancée was the only person in town with whom he was not popular. After a while she fell into the spirit of the thing, and began to feel quite romantic—only, they all wanted to see the ring, which was rather awkward.

As she came out of the post-office and started down the street again, a new figure caught her eye. And her blood froze in her veins as she looked, for it was the same athletic form, familiar in many a nightmare.

Could it be? No—yes—horrible! It was Steve Morris, and they were congratulating him even then, the vampires! Panic seized her. She could not face the man. Turning, she dived into a

near-by store whose dark entrance yawned an offer of obliteration. Here for a few frenzied minutes she proceeded to purchase everything in sight, from ginger crackers to horse liniment, and it was not until she was sure he would be safely around the next corner that she ventured from the store and sped quaking homeward, laughing insanely as she went. Judgment Day was upon her.

She had accepted an invitation to go to a dance that evening, but she debated long with herself as to whether she had the nerve to appear in public at a place where Steve was sure to be. After a hard struggle, she decided that she had, and that she would face the offended stranger, whatever the consequences. It was with no pleasant anticipation that she entered the festal hall, but every time she thought of Steve's surprise at being congratulated, and wondered what he had said, she relapsed into helpless laughter. No wonder that her escort decided she must be crazy.

She pegged silently around the room for a few dances, the terror of Steve lying cold upon her heart and growing every minute. She hoped he would come, so that she could have it over with; this suspense was unbearable. Then she caught sight of him out in the hall as she danced by the door, and cut off her astonished partner in the middle of a sentence to drag him to another room. But of course the inevitable came. A hateful youth went to get her an ice in spite of her entreaties not to be left alone, and Steve at once crossed the room towards her. He did not seem so very furious, but he was horribly dignified, and her courage went down in a nervous gulp.

"How do you do?" he said. "I am glad to see you again."

The eyes of the whole room were fixed upon her. She rose and shook hands, with the original statement that she was glad to see him, too. She was getting hopelessly embarrassed, and his calmness annoyed her beyond expression. He tried to help her out.

"I was afraid that you wouldn't remember me," he said, a suspicion of laughter in his voice. Not remember him! "Won't you dance with me?" he went on. "I've been in town a whole day, and haven't seen you yet."

How clumsy of him! He might have let her introduce the subject of their engagement, as long as it was entirely her affair. She mumbled something about the dance being taken, but, as he turned away, she suddenly decided that she was very silly and called him back.

"No, it isn't, either," she said, with a beaming smile. She hoped he wasn't going to be horrid about it.

They went out to the club porch, and Steve gravely waited for her to begin. He was so tall, and she so pathetically short. She

knew she was going to look pleading when she explained to him, and she didn't want to, a bit.

"Well?" she said.

"Well?" he replied. And then, after a struggling second, he burst into an irresistible laugh.

She looked up with a grateful little ghost of a giggle.

"It's good of you to take it that way," she said. "It is awfully funny, isn't it? To think of me, the haughty, the disdainful—and you whom I have always hated so! I laughed myself at first, but I—I think I feel more like crying now"—this with a weary quaver of the voice. "Wait till you've lived through the nightmares I have," she added vindictively, and they both laughed again.

Then Lou sobered down to the serious business of apologizing.

"You really don't know how sorry I am. I can't imagine a more outrageous thing to do. Of course I don't expect you ever to forgive me, only I should like you to know how I came to do it. It was Mrs. Sherlock Biddle. She asked me if I were engaged to you—imagine it, you of all people!—and I was so astonished and—and annoyed"—she put it mildly—"that I just said, 'Why, yes, of course.' Couldn't have helped it to save my life. But when the people began to congratulate me this morning, and then when I saw you, come back again—oh!"—she shuddered—"you can't imagine what an awful feeling it gave me."

"Indeed I can," answered Steve heartily; "and if it was Mrs. Biddle, I don't wonder you answered her as you did. I'd have said something much worse, I'm sure."

"You couldn't have"—with a mournful sigh. "But now the question is, what are we going to do about it? It's rather an awkward position for both of us."

"Don't think about me," said Steve quickly. "I don't care a hang what the people think. But it's awfully unpleasant for you. We must do something about it right away."

"Oh, that isn't what bothers me," replied Lou—"having every one think we're engaged—though of course it does—fuss one a little. I was chiefly scared of you, wondering how I should ever tell you, and what you'd say when I did. But now that *that's* over, it's just Sherlock. I suppose I shall have to go and tell her I fibbed to her. She won't believe me, of course, but the thought of humiliating myself before her—ugh!" She broke off in disgust.

"Don't do that," said Steve. "I'll think of something else."

They sat for some time in silence, and then Steve looked up with a chuckle.

"Did you really mean that, Miss Trevor, when you said you didn't care whether people thought we were engaged?"

"Not in the least," replied Lou tranquilly. "It only seems ridiculous to me, knowing the way we feel toward each other."

"Well," said Steve, grinning at her, "I was thinking that the best thing we could do would be to really *be* engaged for a little while." And then, as Lou shrieked with laughter: "Well, you needn't laugh. It's mighty sensible, I can tell you. We could easily keep it up for the three weeks I am here, and you won't have to own up to Mrs. Biddle. You can break it some time in the winter, and then the whole thing will be over."

Lou held out one hand to him and wiped her streaming eyes with the other.

"I shall be delighted to be engaged to you," she said, as they shook hands over the agreement.

"It's this way," she went on more seriously. "If we cared the least atom for each other, or ever could, it would be simply unbearable; but you know how it is. I only pray for grace that we may be fairly polite to each other when any one is around." They both laughed, and Lou added: "I really almost like you a little now, though. You've been awfully nice about this thing, and I don't know what I should have done without your brilliant scheme. It'll be great fun, won't it? All the pleasure of shocking people with your engagement without having the thought that you've got to be married hanging over you. Besides, it will be such a saving on the conscience. What a luxury not to have to fib when people ask if I am really engaged to you!"

They were chaffing this way when Steve remembered that they must have a ring. Lou had forgotten about that, too.

"My favorite stone? Why, sapphire, but I doubt if you could find a good-looking imitation. Better get a diamond. Only, for goodness' sake, don't buy it at any town around here. They'd be sure to know you."

"Not on your life," replied Steve. "I'll send to New York for it. It will be a sapphire too, if you don't mind. More suitable to a Sapphira, you know"—Lou groaned—"and, besides, we might as well have the real article. Then you can wear it afterwards if you want to."

And Lou, not much caring what he did, shrugged her shoulders and told him that he might get it if he wanted to, but that he had better keep it himself to give to the next girl he was engaged to.

The following week was a whirl of gayety. The luckless two were dragged from luncheons to receptions, from receptions to dinners, from dinners to dances. All of which they enjoyed in spite of themselves, not only because of the novelty of their situation,



but because each on further acquaintance found the other a most clever and agreeable companion. Steve, though he had rather resented the dislike with which she had confronted him from the first, had always liked Lou. And Lou, seeing that there was no ground for her old opinion that he despised her, came to the conclusion that he was "not half bad." She began to see why he was so universally popular, and mildly wondered what his opinion of her was, for he never showed her by word or sign.

At the end of the week came an invitation to a house-party given in their honor to about a dozen mutual friends. Lou was enchanted, and she and Steve set off in company with several other young people who were also spending the summer in the village. It was a glorious old country place, with every kind of amusement that one could think of, and the little party settled down to two weeks of solid enjoyment. The girls teased Lou somewhat about her engagement to her ancient foe, but she did not care much—rather enjoyed it, in fact, for she felt very superior at not having to blush and look foolish the way girls in love do.

"I haven't developed the engagement simper yet," she said to Steve. "You ought to be proud of me."

"I am," said Steve, and looked at her in a way that made her change the subject.

Everything went well for the first few days. Lou and Steve were thrown much in each other's company, but by this time they were growing used to it, and enjoyed it far more than either would have confessed, though they still quarrelled now and then, as a matter of duty.

But gradually a change came. Lou found herself growing strangely discontented and uneasy. She was annoyed whenever any one mentioned Steve to her, angry when they teased her about him; and as for Steve himself, she felt queer and uncomfortable whenever she thought of him. After all, it was horrid to be engaged this way to a man you hardly knew; and he was so unconcerned about it—didn't seem to think anything of it at all.

"It's a stupid game, and I am growing tired of it," she told herself. "Any one would have enough of a joke after a week and a half."

But it was not until they had been at the house-party a whole week that she discovered that she was falling in love, struggle as she would against herself at every step. The realization of it, coming to her unawares, made her gasp.

What! Steve? Impossible! Of course he was perfectly splendid, but—why, she didn't even like him—and, besides, she didn't approve of falling in love with a man who wasn't in love with her.

She laughed out of pure amazement and horror. Here was a predicament which was as a fire to the former frying-pan. She in love with Steve, he not caring a straw for her, and their names entangled in this hideous farce of an engagement! How unutterably cheap the position! Her cheeks flamed at the thought.

"I might have known better than to get into it," she muttered fiercely. "I might have known that I would fall in love with him. Who could have helped it?"

She wondered how she was ever to go through the time before he left, for not only had her position become suddenly intolerable, but she was sick with the fear that he might discover the change in her feelings. It almost seemed as if she could not keep up her end of the deception a moment longer; but that would be to let him know how she felt.

"And he never shall know," she told herself hotly; "I'll die first."

There followed two days of torment, and then the crisis. Awaking one morning with a sense of impending calamity, she came down to breakfast to find every one waiting for her and her place heaped with presents. She had almost forgotten that it was her birthday, but her friends had not. The gifts had rhymes attached, purported hits on her various failings; but about two-thirds were on the subject of her engagement. These she was forced to read aloud, amid the delighted shrieks of the young barbarians. She was ready to cry with anger and mortification, but she had to laugh instead, because the rhymes were so ludicrous. Looking up once, she caught sight of Steve, with jaw set, staring at her stern-eyed across the table, and she blushed crimson. Her heart thumped, too, and her chin wobbled; so she read all the faster, and laughed again to show him how much she was enjoying it. As soon as breakfast was over she went out on the lawn and quarrelled with him. For a subject she chose the pearl and sapphire crescent he had given her that morning amid the groans of envy of every girl in the room. It was a "stunning" little thing, only of course he had no right to give her anything so valuable, and, under the circumstances, she could not think of accepting it. All this she told him with stately dignity, while he, suddenly the grave stranger once more, stood silently looking down at her, and making her feel irritatingly childish. But when she had finished he only said, with a little twinkle in his eyes, "I am sorry, Lou. I thought a man might give whatever he liked to the girl he was engaged to." To which Lou replied, with fine logic, that "of course they really were engaged, but then, of course, they really weren't, you know," and held out the case containing the disputed crescent. Steve took it, and, apologizing once

more, thrust it into his pocket and strode off toward the tennis-courts. She was dying for it, too.

From this pleasant beginning, things grew worse and worse. In the afternoon they all went on a picnic, throughout which Miss Trevor, carefully avoiding her fiancé, had a thoroughly miserable time. Reaching home towards evening, she and a few who had gone ahead sat down on the piazza steps to wait for the others. It seemed to poor Lou that she could never talk two minutes to any one before the conversation came around to Steve; and, sure enough, it was not long before one of the men, seeking to introduce a subject that would interest her, asked her how long she had been engaged.

"Oh, about three weeks," she answered wearily. "Isn't the sunset glorious?"

And then, to her intense relief, the rest of the party, heralded by the clank of tin pails and shrieks of feminine laughter, marched round the corner of the house.

One of the girls flew up and threw herself down on the steps, an arm about Lou's neck.

"Oh, Lou," she giggled, "it's more fun! We've been teasing Mr. Morris to death. He never spoke to you the whole afternoon, and I'll wager you've quarrelled, only he says it's because you've been engaged so long. Why didn't you ever tell us you were engaged a whole year ago? I think you're mean."

At this the girl on the step below Lou turned around and, fixing her with accusing eye, exclaimed:

"Why, Lou Trevor, you old fraud! You just said, a minute ago, that you had been engaged only three weeks!"

Weary to death of the whole affair, Lou longed to toss up the game and tell them the truth, but it wasn't in her to back down at the last minute. She glanced over at Steve for inspiration; but he only stared back at her with true masculine helplessness, aghast at the mischief he had wrought.

Something must be done. "Why, Steve," she laughed, his first name sticking in her throat, "I don't see why you said a thing like that."

Steve evidently didn't either, but he made a noble effort, looking about him with the air of a baited bull. He was so big and mannish that his embarrassment, though ludicrous, was pathetic, and she smiled encouragement.

"Well," he was saying, "that's all right. It was the—the second time—don't you remember?"

Here he was interrupted by a roar of laughter, but he plunged bravely on: "Don't you remember, Lou? It was last summer, when you were down at South Bay."

A long pause, in which Lou seemed to be studying the raspberry stains on her hands.

"Lou didn't go to South Bay last summer," remarked some one.

But Lou was not stuck; she was even beginning to find a gloomy sort of pleasure in her predicament. Experience had warned her against elaborate fictions, but she was reckless and started in at random, trusting that inspiration would come to her.

"You've given it all away now, Steve," she began, and at this point the inspiration came. It was not a clever one, but she pounced upon it.

"Nobody knew I was there, and by Monday I'd have won my bet. I suppose I might as well tell now, though. It was this way," she explained, turning to the astonished group about her, the far-away look of the story-teller in her eyes. "You all know what a place the Bay is for gossip, and all that? Well, the Woods, while Steve was staying with them, asked me to run down and spend Sunday, and Lou Jamison bet me chocolates I couldn't do it without having any one in town know. Of course I took her up, and added to the bet that no one would find it out for a year afterward. I managed to reach the Woods' without any one seeing me, by rowing over from Stockton, and left the same way early Monday morning. The year would have been up this week, too, if only Steve hadn't given me away."

The company listened to this ingenious tale with great interest, and Lou was flattering herself that she had neatly changed the subject.

"The Woods——" she began; when one of the girls brought her back to the point in question.

"And were you engaged to Steve then?"

"Well," said Lou, blushing with mortification, "Steve seems to think so. I think it's rather vain of him, though, for I'm sure I never knew it."

There was another laugh at this, which some one, relentless, interrupted by saying: "Isn't that funny? I thought you hardly knew Steve then. I knew you had met him, but——"

This was an easy one.

"Oh, yes," replied Lou loftily; "I've known him for years, though I hated him for a long time."

She blessed her hostess for coming out just then and sending them all up to dress for dinner. In the hall she found herself face to face with Steve, who looked like a thunder-cloud. He smiled when he saw her, and told her that she was a "true sport;" but she could not smile back, even at this high praise, for her heart was bitter with the thought of the cheap deception into which she had been

forced. She knew that he despised her; and she cared now, cared so much!

At dinner she sat silent and miserable, every mouthful seeming to suffocate her; and as soon as it was over fled to her own room, with the ancient headache excuse, and gave herself up to the luxury of being thoroughly and openly unhappy. Accordingly, she called herself a few names, pitied herself a little, cried, and then sat down to think. The afternoon's experience was the last straw, she told herself. This nightmare must end somehow. She felt unutterably weary and disgusted, and longed for some big, strong man to come and tell her what to do and then make her do it. At this, of course, she thought of Steve, and felt annoyed somehow that he had not ended the affair himself. But she had to admit that there was no reason why he should have done so. It meant absolutely nothing to him—merely a joke which he was carrying on for her benefit; and he would not be likely to think that it was anything more to her. That thought, at least, was comforting. He need never know about this ill-starred love of hers, which seemed like a very judgment of fate upon her. Perhaps in time, she added hopefully, she might even forget it herself. But something in her heart said no.

The girls came up to find her, but she did not answer when they called, and they tiptoed away, thinking her asleep. A few minutes later, looking out of the window, she saw a white-clad troupe, laden with cushions and paddles, sauntering down the moonlit hill-side to the river; but she had no inclination to join them. Steve would be there, and she shrank from seeing him. She took up a magazine and, after plodding through two pages without reading a word, went down to the piazza, where the gleaming pillars framed a steel-blue sky and a landscape of silver-green.

Perched on the railing, her back against one of the columns, she gazed out over the shining valley to the dark hills beyond, and tried in vain to rouse herself to admiration. The spicy, breathless air of the July night stifled her with its sweetness; the clear, faint song of a far-off bird oppressed her heart with loneliness. On her cold left hand Steve's sapphire seemed to burn her, so she took it off and laid it on the railing by her side. She rubbed the place where it had been. How smooth and strange the finger felt without it!

Just then a quick step crunched up the gravel walk, and presently Steve's tall form swung across the piazza toward her.

She started with surprise, and looked up.

"Oh, is it you, Mr. Morris? I thought you had all gone canoeing."

He sat down on the railing beside her. "No, I knew you were here, and I wanted to see you. It's about this engagement business." He spoke slowly and with evident effort. "It must end. It doesn't



seem square to back out this way, when it was I who proposed the thing, but it wouldn't be square to keep it up, either. I didn't realize what a position it was going to put you in, and I want to apologize. I can't tell you how sorry I am for bringing all this annoyance on you. We'll have to try some other plan with Mrs. Biddle."

Lou was sitting very still, her eyes fixed on a dark patch at the top of the next pillar, where a robin's nest had been torn away. "Yes," she said quietly; "you are right. We can't go on this way any longer. We are getting deeper into fibs and deceptions, instead of avoiding them. It was awful this afternoon, wasn't it?"

"I could have killed them," muttered Steve, but she went on:

"It wasn't your fault, though; you've been splendid about it all along. The whole thing came from my contrariness. It never would have happened if I hadn't told that first fib to Mrs. Biddle. It was silly to care so much about confessing to her right then, as I could have, too. I'll see her and explain it all. Here is your ring," she finished abruptly.

He took it and looked at it silently a few moments, as the moonlight struck cold blue sparkles from it on the palm of his hand.

"Do you remember saying," he asked suddenly, "the night I suggested—our being engaged, that the position would be impossible if we could ever by any chance care for each other?"

Lou's chin was in the air.

"Yes," she said coldly; "it is so fortunate that we have been spared that, at least."

Steve looked gravely down at her. "You have been more fortunate than I," he said.

She drew her breath sharply, but did not speak, and he went on: "I don't know why I should tell you this, little girl; you have shown me very clearly that you do not care for me. But 'way back at the end of that first week, when I saw that I had fallen in love with you, I hoped that some day, when you knew me better, you would come to forget how much you disliked me, and wear my ring for always. It was pretty hard, these last two weeks, not to tell you in every word I said, not to ask you if you had changed. Only to-day you made it clear to me how useless it was to hope."

He had risen, and stood beside her, tall and straight in the moonlight. He still held the ring in his hand. There was a moment of silence, and then snatches of song and laughter, and the splash and clatter of landing, came up the hill from the boat-house.

With a gesture of hopelessness, he raised his arm to toss the ring out into the grass; but Lou put up her hand and stopped him.

"Don't, Steve," she said, with a shaky little laugh. "I think I'll keep the old ring."

# LOST—TWO YEARS

*By Minna Thomas Antrim*

HE stealthily mounted the high stoop. Upon the opposite side of the avenue he could see a policeman slowly approaching, so without delay he sought and found in a corner of the top step that which he knew would be there. In his weakened condition, to descend a steep flight of stone steps was more perilous than to ascend, but this, too, he accomplished.

For months he had subsisted chiefly upon alcohol; for two days practically no food had supplemented this fiery sustenance, therefore now, instead of moving on, he sank purely from exhaustion upon the lowest tread.

It was raining, and the October air was penetrating. He was quite sober after a long debauch, and as he tremblingly unrolled the twenty dollar bill that a pitying sister had obediently hidden in the doorway, he shuddered with horror of self. He was a cad—the first of his name; bitterness like unto death assailed him. Thank God, his mother was dead—had died while he was yet a child; but his father, his dear old Dad, was lying up there, unconscious of the tragedy of his nearness. How vilely he had used the dear old man—and Nance! It was this last outrage that made him shudder in self disgust. He had written to his twin sister to put twenty dollars where he had found it, and had melodramatically threatened to end his life upon the threshold of his old home if she spoke of his need to their father, or tried herself to see him. Terrorizing a woman! Again the horror of it all overwhelmed him. He found little excuse for himself—that he was penniless, literally, and that he could no longer buy food or obtain lodging upon promises. He had not eaten for forty-eight hours, nor had he tasted liquor for half that time. Long ago some of his former intimates had cut him upon the streets; the others he had avoided. His father, after a dozen trials at home, had given him the wherewithal to go West and start afresh, forbidding him to return until he was a changed man. But instead of leaving New York, he had spent the money in appeasing his insatiate thirst. That he had not gone his sister knew, for they had met upon one of the great thoroughfares; but he had bound her to secrecy, and gone his way, leaving with poor Nance the added burden of deception toward a beloved father. Until three days before,

his money or his credit had lasted. Then, driven by despair, gnawing hunger, and maddening thirst, he had written his demand for funds from his sister.

He glanced upward. Yes, there was a light as usual in his father's room. "Dear old Dad! I wonder, if you knew that I was out here in this drizzling rain, would you shelter me?" His reverie was broken by a harsh voice. The policeman had stolen upon him unawares. With a hysterical laugh, the outcast lifted his face so that the electric light shone directly upon it.

"You see, McCool," he said half sneeringly, as the policeman stared unbelievably, "instead of a tramp, as you thought, it's the heir come home."

"I see, Mr. Robert; but—but——"

"You wish the family skeleton to move on, is that it?"

"God knows it's not that, sir, but——"

"Speak up, Cooly, don't be afraid. I'm nobody these days."

"It's Miss Nance, sir," said McCool. "I promised her——"

Again the man hesitated.

"You promised my sister what?"

"If I saw you, to let her know at once, any hour of the day or night, by telephone. Oh, Mr. Bob——"

Robert Heath held up his hand warningly.

"None of that, Cooly; it's no use. I'm going in a moment, and—if you like, you may tell my sister I got the money, and that I——" A tremor shook the deep voice.

"Let me ring the bell, sir. The judge is a sound sleeper, and Miss Nance——"

"No," protested his listener. "No, Cooly; no prodigal brother act ever again. Give Nance my love and message, and—that's all."

With a wave of his hand the ne'er-do-well rose unsteadily. His condition was pitiable. His clothing was soaked. He passed slowly down the avenue toward the "Seamy Side."

"God pity him!" sighed McCool. "I'll 'phone her in the mornin'."

Years before, Jerry McCool had been a butler in Judge Heath's family. "The twins" had been his pride. When Mr. Bob came home from college, already bewitched by the demon that was to be his master, it was to McCool that the judge instinctively turned for sympathy, and not in vain. It was Jerry who followed the boy night after night for two miserable years, and brought him safely home. For this faithfulness, Judge Heath had used his influence to crown McCool's lifelong ambition to wear a helmet and carry a club.

That his beat took in his benefactor's home filled honest Jerry

with delight, and Nance with comfort, for she immediately made Jerry aware of her brother's continued presence in the city, and received from her faithful ally frequent counsel.

As Robert Heath toiled along full of physical discomfort, his remorse became more and more unbearable; hence, as the crow flies, he made for the nearest restaurant where men without dress clothes were welcomed. Here he ate sparingly, and drank as one drinks whose thirst has long been denied.

At a late hour, after having paid old and new scores, he lurched out of the bar-room and dizzily attempted to cross the street. A moment later a huge motor-car, filled with belated clubmen, swept around the corner, and in the twinkling of an eye the young dipsomaniac lay crushed beneath the machine.

The while poor Nance lay among her pillows, breathlessly listening for the hesitating footsteps of her brother, not knowing that hours before he had come and gone.

"Did you want anything, Mr. Roberts?"

Who the deuce was Mr. Roberts, he wondered lazily.

"Will you take some of this broth?" the same voice asked, holding a spoon to his lips. He swallowed gratefully. Spoon food administered by a Vision in white was quite to his liking.

"Where am I?" he asked presently.

The Vision told him the name of the hospital.

"And you?"

"I am one of the nurses," explained the attendant.

"What the devil—beg pardon—what has happened?"

"To you?"

"To me," said Roberts.

"An accident, about two weeks ago."

The invalid nodded comprehensively.

"Obviously, but what sort of an accident? How and where did it occur? Pardon me, I am rather interested in the details."

"I cannot tell you exactly, Mr. Roberts. I——"

"Mr. Roberts?" exclaimed the sick man, with a frown. "That's not my name."

The nurse smiled indulgently.

"No? Well," she said soothingly, "you must sleep now——"

"But," insisted her charge, "I must know a few things. Where are Dad and Nance? Do they know?"

The Vision in white shook her head.

"You must not talk," she said firmly, "or——"

"No threats, please," smiled "Roberts," after a moment's pause.

"I will be good if you promise——"

"What?" demurely asked his nurse.

"To come back soon again."

"I promise," said Nurse Aline.

When Robert Heath had arrived at Trinity Hospital, the doctors were of the opinion that both legs would have to be amputated; besides, his internal injuries were serious. One dissenting physician, however, fought bravely against the majority. The young man's superb, though ravaged, physique filled him with enthusiasm, and he determined to fight for each splendid limb as though it were his own. This, happily, was Dr. Fleck, the resident physician. For ten days he devoted the major part of his time to the case of "young Roberts." The nurses were equally interested. The motor-car victim was of exceptional comeliness, they agreed. They put him in a private room, and everything that could be done to save his dubious members was done, to say nothing of care bestowed upon other injuries.

Skill, good nursing, and his still vigorous constitution conquered, hence when Nurse Aline carried the news of young "Roberts's" consciousness to Dr. Fleck and her sister nurses, great was the rejoicing.

Meanwhile, "What does it all mean?" wonderingly murmured Heath. "Where are Dad and Nance?" That he was outcast from home he knew not; neither had he any remembrance of the miry paths through which he had recently dragged the good old name. Therefore he smiled happily. He knew that his sister and dear old Dad would be with him the moment they knew. Meanwhile, what a beastly shame for a pretty girl like the Vision to be a nurse! Such things should not be allowed. What pretty hair, what demure lips!

"I am afraid you have not slept, Mr. Roberts," said she, coming upon him suddenly.

He smiled. "You are a mind reader, but, really, I could not."

"But, Mr. Roberts, you must."

"Beg pardon, Miss——"

"My name is Aline."

"And my name," he interrupted excitedly, "is Heath—Robert Heath, Jr., son of Judge Robert Heath."

The nurse's face paled slightly.

"When you were brought here you had a card upon you bearing the name of 'James Roberts,' which we thought was your own," she said quietly.

"That's strange," murmured Heath. "I never knew any one of that name. I should have had my card-case in my clothes; but never mind. Will you kindly call up the house and let them know?"



The nurse looked troubled.

"Had you been away from home long when you were hurt?"

Heath smiled amusedly.

"No," he said; "I had attended the Bachelors' Ball, I think—anyhow, that's the last thing I recall. My happy home and I were never separated for long, thank God!"

The nurse stared at her patient. There was no deceit in the face lying upon the pillow.

"Poor Nance!" murmured Aline. How often had her friend Nance poured into her sympathetic ear the story of this brother's wayward life, and of her unabated love for the culprit! With a few words of assurance, Nurse Aline left the room, full of perplexity.

"So you think, Dr. Fleck, that my son's memory has lapsed two years?" said Judge Heath thoughtfully. "Briefly, that he has lost two years out of his past?"

"He has. Your son has no more idea that he has given you and his sister two years of anxiety than that he has inherited the crown of England."

"Do you apprehend that he will ever relapse into old errors?"

"That, of course, no mortal can tell, but I should be willing to take a fighting chance for a lovable fellow like Bob. He is built like a giant," said the young man's champion, "and I believe—but here we are." The hansom drew up before the hospital, and the two alighted. "Act precisely as though there had never been any estrangement between you," cautioned the doctor.

Softly the old man tiptoed into Bob's room.

"Dad, dear old Daddy," joyously exclaimed the invalid, "give us a paw—give us two paws!"

"Bob—lad——" The judge could get no further.

With a happy laugh, Bob "tackled" emotion with badinage.

"You're a dandy Daddy, to let your only son and heir be mangled, maimed, and marred for two weeks, and not even send around!"

The judge blew his nose apologetically.

"And rogue Nance—where is she? A fine sister indeed—a twin, to boot."

"She's out there talking to Aline," explained the judge.

"To Aline?"

"Your nurse, her old chum, Aline Constairs, the commodore's daughter—you remember, surely?"

"Do you mean to say my nurse is the everlasting heiress that you and Nance were so keen on marrying me to?"

"The same dear girl that you would never meet—but now without a copper, I'm sorry to say," said the judge.

A cloud crossed Bob's face. "Daddy——"

"Well, son?"

"If—I could win her—now, would you——"

The old man lifted his finger warningly. Nance and Nurse Aline were coming in arm in arm.

"Hello, Nancelet, old girl!" said Bob gently, but his first glance was for Aline. Nance's eyes were too full to see clearly, but she laid her lips adoringly upon Bob's.

"My blessed boy! You are better?" she queried.

"Right as a trivet, thanks to—Aline," said Bob boldly.

The Vision blushed; then, in spite of protest, left the trio alone.

A year has passed. It is a rainy night—in fact, the exact counterpart of an October night just one year ago. A new Robert Heath walks up the same high stoop, whistling gaily. He is, he thinks, the happiest man in the world, for perverse Nurse Aline, after leading him what seemed destined to be an endless chase, has consented to share his name and all his worldly goods. Nance's joy and his Dad's satisfaction he is picturing as he puts his key in the lock. As he passes the library, he sees the judge mixing his inevitable night-cap.

"Will you join me?" asks his father politely.

"No, thanks," says Bob; "for some reason or other, since I was hurt the very smell of alcohol sickens me."

"Thank God!" mutters the judge devoutly.

Whereupon Bob springs the good news, and the two men clasp hands in a grip that speaks more than a vocabulary.

"You must take a motor wedding tour. You shall have the finest car money will buy," finally says the judge.

His son stares, then chuckles.

"I should think you'd detest them, since through one you nearly lost the hope of your house," he laughs.

"Not a bit of it," replies the judge earnestly. "Blessed be the man who invented the red devils, I say."

Whereupon, all unconscious of his father's reason for rejoicing over a motor-car accident, Bob goes to bed.



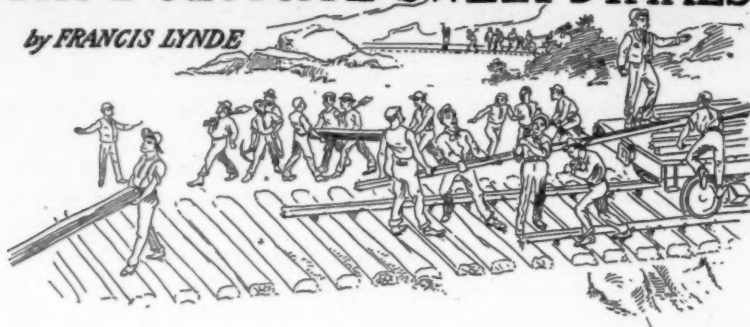
## I DREAMED

BY CURTIS HIDDEN PAGE

I DREAMED that I was lying still and dead,  
Yet heard one sobbing for me—it was you!  
For I had been so dear to you, you said—  
But, ah! dreams come not true.

# The DOLOMITE SWEEPSTAKES

by FRANCIS LYNDE



IT was Upham, the assistant engineer in charge of the tunnel-boring under Elk Pass, who was responsible for the legend that Brice, chief of construction on the Utah Extension, had once fallen under the chariot wheels of the god of mischance on the sentimental speedway.

Upham's story was in the nature of a vindication of his friend and classmate. The assistant in tunnel-borings was in Denver for a conference with the general manager, and the evening found four or five of us circling the cheerful wood fire which is the chief feature luxurious in the smoking-room of the United Railways Club. Some one had remarked that Brice was a true product of a commercial age—all business and no sentiment. Whereupon Upham had paused in the refilling of his pipe to disagree.

"That's all you know about it," was his comment. "Dick fell in once, over head and ears, to my certain knowledge—and he's still in. And the worst of it is, he has queered himself so thoroughly that nothing short of a miracle will ever induce the woman in the case to forgive him."

Naturally, we wanted to know more, and Upham lighted his pipe and went into the details.

"It happened last summer, when Brice was having his little scrap with the Transcontinental for the right of way at the head of Elk Canyon. Our Line ran up the Yellow Dog, over Shunt Pass, and into the Elk basin to the present tunnel site, and the route was supposed to be a dead secret—known only to Brice, who had originated it, and a few of our officials."

"Like fits!" cut in a Transcontinental man who happened to be one of the group. "We knew about it before Brice had driven his first preliminary stake."

"Don't butt in if you want the story," snapped Upham. "I said it was supposed to be a secret. One evening, at the summit of

Shunt Pass, Brice met his fate. There had been a peak party from the Elks Inn to the top of Chingato, and on the descent one of the young women strayed and got lost. Brice found her, did the hospitable act in the way of food and fire, entertained her until the moon rose to show them the trail, and piloted her down the mountain until they met the search party coming up from the inn to look for her."

"Thought you said he queered himself," said the Transcontinental man.

"I'm coming to that. Though they had been hobnobbing for a couple of hours, waiting for the moon to rise, and Brice, by his own confession, was convinced that she was the one altogether lovely, neither of them knew the other's name till the moment of parting. Then Brice introduced himself; and the young woman playfully told him he would find her name written on a bit of wood which she had left lying by the camp fire.

"He went back, found the bit of wood, read the name 'Isabel Vanderpoel' on it, and began to bleat for the fool-killer. You see, he jumped to the conclusion that she was the daughter of President Vanderpoel, of the Transcontinental; and during that two-hour wait he had told her all about the railroad manœuvre—all the things that the Transcontinental people were supposed not to know."

"Ass!" said Billy Grampus, condensing his contempt for the sentimentalists into the single word.

"Oh, no," contended Upham; "only a man in the first stages of the love fever. Well, figuring her as the president's daughter, he supposed, as a matter of course, she would tell her father what the Utah proposed doing to him; how the march was to be stolen on the Transcontinental, which was then building up the Elk. Sure enough, in a day or two there came a blanket injunction from the courts; and if Brice hadn't been smooth enough to buy up Rader's abandoned mining claim, we would have been euchred out of our tunnel site."

"I know," said I. "He told me that much of it when I sold him the claim."

"That was the end of it for a while," Upham continued. "But one evening, a few weeks later, Brice had an appointment with our Mr. Calliday at the Elks Inn. We were together there, Dick and I—which is how I chanced to be in at the death. Brice, still in love, and still a little spiteful, mind you, met Miss Vanderpoel in the hotel lobby, taxed her good-naturedly with the betrayal of his plans, got a flat contradiction and a metaphorical slap in the face, and came to me for comfort. All I could do was to tell him that he had done for himself; that Miss Isabel wasn't the president's daughter—was

neither a relative nor an acquaintance, so far as I knew. That killed him," he concluded. "He's never been the same man since."

The laugh went around the small circle of listeners. To a man up the tree, Brice, now busily pushing the extension beyond Elk Pass tunnel, seemed very much alive. And a few days after the foregoing conversation, when Brice came in for a consultation with Mr. Calliday, I looked in vain for the scars left on his clean-cut, masterful face by the sentimental affray.

"We are not in very good shape to race the Transcontinental," he told President Calliday, at the beginning of the interview. "They have their high line over Saddle Back graded and ironed to Dunn's—this point"—pencilling the outspread map on Mr. Calliday's table. "That gives them a ten-mile start of us, and we have one hundred and twenty-six feet of rock to bore through before we shall see daylight under Elk Pass."

The president scowled thoughtfully at the map. The situation was this: while both railroads were feeling for an outlet across the Rockies to the westward, Dolomite, a new gold camp, was beginning to get its name in the papers with accelerative headlines. The rush of people to the new camp meant business for the railroad that would be the first to reach Dolomite; and it was to weigh our chances that Mr. Calliday had wired Brice to come to Denver.

"How about the work below Dunn's?" asked the president, rather unhopefully, I thought.

"If we were that far along, we should have the advantage," said Brice confidently.

"H'm! But Dolomite would be on a branch—for the Vanderpoel line or ours. How about our right-of-way up the Sombre River?"

"I surveyed that last month—on chances. We're safe to within a mile of the camp."

"And from that point?"

"At the mile limit we come to private property owned by the mining people."

"But they will not oppose the building of a railroad," said Mr. Calliday.

"Oh, no; they are not opposing. On the contrary, they put a premium on speed. While I had no authority to make deals, I got the principal mine owners together for a little preliminary talk. They gave me the laugh; said we were too slow, and that they were banking on the Transcontinental."

There was hopeful expectancy in Mr. Calliday's eye when he said: "I hope you didn't let it rest at that, Mr. Brice?"

Brice shook his head. "I'm only a chief of construction, and I



had to buck up against a general manager. Hogan, of the Transcontinental, was on the ground, with a blank card from President Vanderpoel. But I did contrive to keep Hogan from swallowing us whole. A right-of-way easement for one railroad will be granted through the mining properties to the company whose rails are the first to reach the limit line. And, as a bonus, that company will be given the moving of all the ore in the dumps at the time of its arrival—a good many thousand tons.”

Mr. Calliday sprang to his feet so suddenly that his pivot-chair went over backward.

“Mr. Brice, did you get that down on paper?” he demanded.

Brice drew a long envelope from his pocket and laid it on the table.

“There is a copy of the agreement. Hogan has another, and the original is placed in escrow in the Dolomite National Bank. When our rails—or President Vanderpoel’s—reach the boundary of the first mining claim, the paper, with the proper deeds of easement attached, will be taken out of the bank by the mayor of the town and turned over to the winner.”

The president took a nervous turn up and down the room. When he came back he picked up the overthrown chair.

“Brice, our line must go into Dolomite ahead of the Transcontinental. Can you put it there?”

“If you will back me, and keep hands off, I’ll put it there—or put the Utah into bankruptcy,” was the cool reply.

“You shall have a free hand.”

“Very well; I’ll begin at once. I need an all-around man to chase up and down the line with me.” Then he added the word which enables me to tell this story: “Rader, here, belonged to the engineering department before you made him your private secretary. May I borrow him?”

The president was on the giving hand just then, and I suppose it never occurred to him to consult my choice in the matter, or to find out if I had any.

“You can have anything you need, Mr. Brice; only give us that line into Dolomite,” he said. And so I was elected.

I call myself a pretty rapid man, but the new boss certainly put me through all the paces that first day. There were telegrams uncounted: to Upham and Holtkamp at the tunnel, to the headquarters of the various contractors, to employment agencies as far east as Pittsburg, to supply houses, to bridge builders, to the timber people who were getting out the cross-ties; and the burden of them all was, “How soon can you”—and so on.

One of the earlier wires of the day was to Doyle, of Doyle &

Quinton, contractors for the grading on the Extension; and the two o'clock train from Colorado Springs brought the senior partner to Denver, and, an hour later, to our office, which was across the corridor from the president's.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Doyle," said Brice briskly. "You've seen Mr. Calliday?"

Doyle nodded. He was a big Irishman with pig-like eyes and a fat face made to look still fatter by a closely cropped, round beard.

"Then I take it you have signed the contract for the grading on the new Dolomite branch?"

"I did. 'Tis a bad job, with no way to come at it; but I'd do anything for Misther Calliday."

"Good! Now, when do you begin to throw earth on the main line sections beyond the tunnel?"

"The first minute you'd be giving us a railroad thrack to let us in with the outfit, Misther Brice."

"We can't wait for that," was the curt decision. "You'll have to get over the range by main strength and awkwardness."

Doyle made difficulties, and Brice let him say it all without interrupting. That was a trick of his—to encourage a man to exhaust his ammunition. Then he opened up:

"Mr. Doyle, I took my tunnel machinery over Shunt Pass when they said the trail was impossible for a man on foot. Later, we took a duplicate plant over the mountain and installed it at the west end. What we've done, you can do."

Doyle had one remaining shot for delay, and he fired it.

"To tell ye the plain truth, then, Misther Brice, we can't get men. We're working short-handed this day on the west-ind sections. The labor market's skinned."

Brice sat far back in his chair, and he seemed to be studying the face of the big man through his half closed eyes.

"We are going to help you out on the labor shortage, Mr. Doyle. But there is one other little matter I want to mention. I happen to know that you are carrying double; that the Lafferty Company, contractors on the Transcontinental, is only another name for Doyle & Quinton. It's all right; it's business. But by the terms of the contract you have just signed you are under forfeit to have our grade completed and ready for the steel to Dolomite yards by September first——"

"Barrin' delays caused by the company and the lack of laborin' men," put in the contractor.

"Yes; but barring no diligence on your part," snapped Brice.

"What I was going to add is this: we will make the five-hundred-dollars-a-day forfeit a bonus of equal amount for every twenty-

four hours you can anticipate your limit. And we'll stick your bondsmen to the ultimate penny for every day you delay us beyond the limit."

Doyle tried to look as if he took it easy, but he was hit; he showed it by the way he hurried off to keep what we both suspected was a purely imaginary engagement.

I have often said I wouldn't take a paid-up life insurance policy for what I learned about railroad building during the next six weeks on the Boiling Water race-course. Every time Brice jabbed in the spur it brought blood. Every obstacle that got in the way—and there were plenty of them—was promptly ridden down. From first to last we were never delayed for slow material; and in spite of the organized thievery of our men by the Transcontinental people, we managed to keep Doyle & Quinton's camps full from start to finish.

Only once in the six weeks did I get a glimpse of the sentimental side of the boss. It was when we were starting down from Dunn's with the steel, laying more miles to the day than the keenest man in the track gang had ever hoped to lay. A Denver newspaper had come over from the tunnel—by Upham's forwarding—and that evening in front of our camp tent I saw Brice poring over a marked paragraph on the society page. Afterward I caught him with the back of his watch open. There was the picture of a girl in it, and he blushed like a school-boy when he saw that I saw. But he passed the watch over to me and let me look at the picture.

"The future Mrs. Richard Brice?" I ventured.

"Oh, no," he rejoined. "It is the picture of a young lady who hates me very cordially."

"Yet she gives you her picture," I replied.

"No; my sister sent it to me; she doesn't know I have it," he answered, rather vaguely.

Later on I found the newspaper and read the marked paragraph for myself. It was a bare announcement that Professor Schuyler Vanderpoel and his daughter Isabel would spend the summer in the Colorado mountains, locality or localities not named.

With such an artist as Brice in the saddle, it soon began to look as if we stood some chance to win in the railroad race. Three weeks after the rush developed, Upham and Holtkamp shook hands through the completed tunnel; and with the opened line of track communication we began to crawl up steadily upon the Transcontinental's ten-mile lead.

Twenty miles above the mouth of the Sombre the two track-laying forces were neck and neck, each on its own side of the narrow valley, and each straining every nerve in the race. But at this point Drew, the chief of construction for the enemy, put one of his pet fills

across the mouth of a gulch to save a detour. He had barely got the steel laid on the high embankment when a cloud-burst came tearing down the gulch, and he had to replace several thousand yards of earthwork.

It was a facer for Drew, and a respite for us. That night Brice slept from seven to seven, and I had to rout him out of his berth in the dinkey car after the camp cook had thrice yelled the breakfast call.

"We're in it now," I hazarded, when we had taken our places at the deserted trestle table in the mess tent. "Drew has lost whatever show he had—permanently."

But the boss brought me up with a round turn.

"Don't shake hands with yourself yet, my son. We win when we get that right-of-way guaranty out of the Dolomite National, and not an appreciable minute sooner." Whereupon he drained his coffee cup in two gulps, and went out to drive the work just a little harder than before.

The cloud-burst gave us a five-mile advantage, but Drew must have wrought miracles, for in less than a week he was abreast of us again, and the chanteys of the two gangs of spike-drivers might have been timed by a single soloist.

About this time Mr. Calliday came over from Denver. He had just discovered that Doyle & Quinton and the Lafferty Company were one and the same; and he was more than apprehensive.

"Doyle will jockey, as sure as fate, and make it a question of the longest purse," he told Brice. "When it comes to that, we are beaten. Vanderpoel can bribe twice to our once."

Brice never turned a hair.

"We do no bribing while I'm in command. I've known about this double-barrelled contract from the beginning, and you may leave Mr. Patrick Doyle to me."

The president's face was a study. He was long on cold-blooded nerve, himself, and he appreciated it in others.

"I'll be hanged if I don't believe you are more than a match for all of them, Brice," he said shortly; and Brice's rejoinder was quite as crisp: "Of course I am; otherwise I shouldn't be here."

The neck-and-neck held its own straight away to the mouth of the Sombre, and they told us that the bets in the Dolomite pool-rooms were even. Then we gained a lap, and the odds stood at a hundred to twenty on Utah, with few takers. It was this way. At the turn where the two branch lines spurred off to run up the canyon of the Sombre, Drew was on the wrong side of the Boiling Water, with a bridge to build. Everything that could be transported by teams was on the grounds, and the stone abutments were in place and

ready for the superstructure; but the heavy steel trusses had to wait until the advancing track could bring them to the front. So we were starting up the Sombre while Drew was still bolting and rivetting his bridge over the Boiling Water.

But there was also a bridge ahead of us—a single short span across the Sombre, at Betterman's ranch, two miles below the gold camp. Like Drew, Brice had also made ready in advance, and while our track end was still five miles short of the stream crossing at Betterman's, we had a wire from Denver notifying us that our bridge steel was on the way.

Thus far Doyle had done nothing worse than to encourage his laborers to go over to Lafferty when Lafferty needed them; and our grade was nearly completed. Yet it was borne in upon me that Doyle had been purchased; that he had a knife up his sleeve for us which would be drawn and used when the occasion offered.

It was while the bridge steel was in transit that Brice got a letter with an Eastern postmark, and I saw him change countenance as he read it. That made me curious; the more since the address on the envelope was in a woman's handwriting.

He tore the letter painstakingly into little bits, and I should have thought no more of it if the small Italian water-boy, who was avidly learning English, had not put together some of the pieces and brought them to me to be helped in translating the words. Even then I should never have guessed that the scraps were from Brice's letter.

Now, however, there was no longer any mystery about the boss's change of countenance. The pieced bits spelled out the signature, "Your loving sister Edith," and the reconstructed sentences read: "Professor Vanderpoel and Isabel are in Colorado again, and I hear they are going or gone to Dolomite. Don't give Isabel a chance to snub you. She still hates you very affectionately."

By this time the Dolomites were giving us a grand-stand audience every day, parties of them, men and women, driving down on buckboards to see the finish of the railroad race. I understood perfectly why Brice looked each fresh batch of sightseers over so carefully, and why he kept out of the way of all of them. He was aching to see Miss Vanderpoel again; and he was afraid he might see her and be snubbed.

But there was another who looked with a disapproving eye upon the groups of spectators, namely, M'Grath, foreman of track-layers; and he complained piteously to the boss.

"'Tis the aujence that's delayin' the game now, Misther Brice!" he protested. "Wid all thim wimmen 'round, I can't be givin' me or-rders the proper imphasis. On'y to-day, whin I'd want to be givin' Dinnis Moriarty what he's nadin', there's a purty gyurl



shtandin' close by, and I hez to say, says I, 'Misther Moriarty, wud ye plaze be doin' me the favor to be moving thim crookit legs av yours a little more allaygro?'"

Brice laughed. But Mac was the best driver in the bunch, and the boss promised to secure him swearing-room if the grand-standers pressed too hard upon the ropes another day. But, as it happened, the catastrophe made it unnecessary.

Although I was an eye-witness of the nerve-shaking event, I saw only what one soldier sees in the thick of a battle—which is next to nothing in the bird's-eye sense. But I can describe the situation, and perhaps the picture will portray itself.

Our end-of-track had just emerged from the canyon proper, and was in a small basin of the Sombre. At the upper end of the basin, a short half-mile beyond the track-end, was Betterman's ranch and our bridge site, with the piers already constructed, and the grade completed to and beyond them.

Within the hour I had taken a telegram from our operator at Sombre Junction, saying that engine 1017, Jebb, engineer, was on its way up the branch with the bridge steel.

At that, Brice had set the track force at work laying a temporary side-track to make room for the coming material cars; and Doyle, who was standing by, had suddenly got anxious about the width of the notch under the cliff where the line emerged from the narrow canyon. "There may be boonches in that rock-cut that won't let thim steel cars pass with the trusses; I'll have a gang work it out," he had said; and a little later we heard the clink of the driller's hammers going in the cutting.

By good luck there was only a single group of sight-seers on the ground when the mellow roar of the 1017's chime announced the up-coming of the steel train—a party of pleasure campers whose tents had been newly pitched under the pines just above our bridge site. Jebb's whistle was a call for extra haste on the part of the tracklayers. M'Grath glanced appealingly at Brice, and the boss beckoned to me.

"Rader, go up and ask those people to give us a little more room," he said. "They are getting on Mac's nerves."

I started to obey, but before I could reach the campers the alarm went off. The hoarse rumbling of the steel train was in the air, but above it rose the sharp yell of the quarrymen in the cutting: "Fire in the rock!"—their warning cry when they have lighted the fuses for a blast.

There was a stampede in that vicinity for about two-thirds of a minute. I forgot all about the sight-seeing people, and looked back. Big Doyle was chasing his feet out of the cutting, throwing up his

arms and bellowing at our trackmen. There was a frantic rush for safety on the part of the track-layers; but the steady *chug-a chug-a, chug-a chug-a*, of 1017's exhaust kept right on. Brice gave one haggard look down the canyon; then he saw me and the paralyzed sight-seers. The next thing I knew, he had passed me like a shot and was herding the scared folk ahead of him like a flock of frightened sheep.

There were several young women in the bunch, and among them the one who had saved Moriarty from M'Grath's wrath the day before. She was a little behind the others, and she stumbled and fell. Brice gathered her up in his arms and ran with her to the shelter of a little dry arroyo; and the next second the dynamite got in its work, filling the air with flying rocks and the whole basin with deafening echoes.

There was a tableau in the little dry ditch where three of us had taken refuge. The young woman, whom I recognized as the original of the picture in Brice's watch-case, got out of his arms as if she disliked him.

"I—I hope you are not hurt," he said, and I wondered how a man who had been driving track-layers and everybody else for six strenuous weeks could speak so gently.

"Not this time, Mr. Brice," she said coldly. Evidently she had not forgiven the first hurt to her pride, when he had suspected her of having given away the Utah's plans.

There was no time for further talk, and there were all sorts of emotions writing themselves on the boss's face when we hurried down the slope to see what havoc Doyle's untimely blast had wrought. It was a-plenty. Nobody had been hurt, because Jebb's engine had been behind, pushing the train. But the cars of bridge steel were partly in the river and partly buried under an avalanche of broken rock.

From that moment Brice seemed to let go all hold. In the reckoning with Doyle, he let the big Irishman do all the talking, and never breathed a hint of what everybody was suspecting—that Doyle had deliberately wrecked the bridge train to delay us.

Worse still, while he immediately set the track force at work helping Doyle's men to clear the wreck, he did not stay to drive things in person. For three or four hours he shut himself up in the dinkey car and was at home to nobody; and the next day he spent a good deal of his time at the tent camp under the pines.

I saw, or thought I saw, his drift. He was a man in love; and, having once offended Miss Vanderpoel, he was neglecting everything in the effort to square himself. It was tough. I could see that we were in for a defeat, for which every one connected with our outfit

was going to get the blackest kind of a black eye from Mr. Calliday and the management.

Things went on in this way for two whole days; and twelve hours more would bring Drew's tracklayers even with us. By evening of the second day I could see that even Doyle was getting nervous. There is nothing that will rattle a guilty man so effectually as something he can't understand.

"What'll the boss be thinking of, these days, Misther Rader," said the Irishman, coming to the dinkey after the six-o'clock supper.

"If I were you, I should be willing to pay pretty high to find that out, Mr. Doyle," said I.

"Talk straight, Misther Rader," said the contractor; and I took him at his word.

"You know, and I know, and Mr. Brice knows, that you were paid to wreck that train. It's in my mind that he's giving you a chance to make good."

I expected an instant and bullying denial, but it did not come. Instead, he said under his breath: "Is it money ye mane, Misther Rader?"

I nodded. If I could induce Doyle to try to bribe the boss, I thought there might be a chance of shogging Brice into action.

"Where will I be finding him?" was the next tremulous question. "I'll play square with him; before God, I will!" and then I saw that Mr. Patrick Doyle was that most pitiable object, a big man in a blue funk.

I started him off for the tent camp under the pines, and when he was on the way made a hasty detour so as to be before him with Brice. It was just at the edge of dusk, and half way between our bridge site and the tents I began to meet the young people from the camp strolling down in couples—going to see Drew's night gang win the lap that was to defeat us, I supposed.

I stepped aside in the shadow of the pines. Brice and Miss Vanderpoel were well in the rear of the others, and as they came up he was pleading with her.

"How can you hold enmity against me so long?" he was saying. "Haven't I done everything——"

"You are doing something now to make me think less of you, Mr. Brice; you have been doing it for two days—when you ought to have been doing something else."

"I know," he confessed. "But it has come to this: if I can't have your forgiveness, nothing else makes any difference. I've reached the point where I don't care what happens."

Clearly it was time for me to intervene, and I stepped out of the shadow.

"Doyle is coming to see you, Mr. Brice," I said quickly. "He is just there—at the end of the bridge abutment."

"Go!" she commanded; and when Brice turned away, rather reluctantly, she spoke to me. "This is Mr. Rader, isn't it?"

I acknowledged the fact, a bit awkwardly, I'm afraid. She was tremendously pretty standing there tapping the gravel of the path with an impatient little foot.

"Shall we walk on slowly?" she asked, feeling the strain of things as I did, I suppose.

"Yes," I blurted out. "The fact is, Miss Vanderpoel, that big Irishman is a criminal; and if Mr. Brice should happen to fall into the river and get drowned——"

"Oh!" she said, with the accent terrified. And when she added, "Let us hurry!" I knew that the boss was forgiven.

The two men were standing on the river side of the bridge abutment, and we stopped just at the end of the great block of masonry. Brice was doing the talking when we came within earshot.

"Let us see if we fairly understand each other, Mr. Doyle," he was saying, and the words were fairly brittle. "You confess that you wrecked the bridge train purposely, and now you are offering to divide with me the money which somebody, whose name you have not mentioned, paid you for doing it?"

"That's it—that's just it, Misther Brice," said the contractor in a voice that was woolly.

"And you have been led to believe that I would fall in with your proposal because I have been apparently neglecting my work?" Pie-crust was nothing to the shortness of this.

"Sure, what would annybody think?"

"I'll tell you what I think, Mr. Doyle: I think you are going to end your days in the penitentiary. You have put us out of the fight; but when we get through making you pay damages, we'll tackle you on the criminal count. Your bondsmen will make it worth while for us to be beaten into Dolomite by the men who hired you."

"You can't prove annything!" said the hoarse voice; and again I thought it was time to intervene.

"Mr. Brice has one witness," said I, stepping around the corner of the abutment.

"Mr. Brice has two witnesses," said Miss Isabel, bravely taking her turn at it,

Doyle sat down on a rock and became a lump of stricken adipose. Then Brice hit straight out from the shoulder.

"I don't have to convict you on your own confession, Mr. Doyle. Brannigan, the man who fired the blasts in obedience to your order, *given after the train was within hearing*, will swear to what he knows."

"'Tis a devil out of hell you are!" said Doyle; and then he began to beg.

Brice gave his arm to Miss Vanderpoel and cut the prayer for mercy short.

"There is one way out of it for you, and only one. Go over to Lafferty, your partner, and make him give you what men you will need to straighten out that bridge and get it in place on these abutments by to-morrow at daybreak. If you don't, we'll cinch you first and send you to jail afterward."

I had no right to play the eavesdropper again, but I could hardly help overhearing what Miss Isabel said to the boss when we were coming out upon the grade behind the abutment. "No, thank you; Mr. Rader can take me back to our camp—no, you must *not* come. You thought once—last summer—that I had betrayed you. I did not then, and I shall not now. Go back to your work; and—oh, Richard, please don't let them beat you!"

They say that fear is the lever that lifts the heaviest weights; and I guess it is a true word. Doyle sweat blood for the next twenty-four hours, smashed Lafferty—and, incidentally, Drew and the Transcontinental—by stealing the men from the other line to help him, and we won the race to Dolomite by a full quarter of a mile, with the entire population of the great gold camp on hand to see when the last rail was getting itself spiked into place.

The mayor of the town was on deck, according to programme, with a long envelope which he handed to Brice when the cheering died down, and there was some motion toward speech-making. But the boss coolly buttoned the envelope into the inside pocket of his duck shooting coat and pushed through the crowd to the forewheel of a buckboard driven by Miss Vanderpoel.

I have said that she was pretty enough to start a stopped clock, and just then I should have used a stronger figure—if I could have found it. She was certainly hard to beat when she dropped the reins and put both of her hands into Brice's and said:

"You called it 'The Dolomite Sweepstakes,' didn't you? Are you quite satisfied with the purse, Mr. Brice?"



## WINTER TESTS

BY GRACE F. PENNYPACKER

WHEN summer drops her leafy screen  
We see where song-birds' nests have been.  
When fortune's fluttering leaves depart  
We find true friendship's honest heart.



# THE MONSTROUS PICKEREL OF GILLETTE'S DAM

*By Charles Newton Hood*

THE two old men had separated along in the afternoon, instead of fishing sociably together under the two companionable trees, chestnut and maple, which grew close to the water's edge, as had been their wont. For once it had been decided that their lines should be cast in different portions of the waters of Gillette's dam. And so at about half past four old Mr. Love was far up near the head of the pond, while Mr. Grove was trying various styles of tempting bait down nearer the spillway.

It had been an unwritten law that the time to start for home was five o'clock, so that supper in the Grove domicile and dinner in the home of Love should not be delayed. The drive occupied forty-three minutes, as had been timed again and again, and eighteen minutes more were required for acquiring presentability after a fishing excursion, as had also been computed by frequent experiment.

Colonel Grove's old mare, who was hitched to the fence under a tree nearer the road, knew by instinct that the time for departure was close at hand, and she whinnied, at first gently and suggestively and then loudly and impatiently. For the first time that season, however, there was no response. Something important and unprecedented was happening. There had been a sudden shout from old Mr. Love, far up the stream, and, after one glance, old Mr. Grove had hauled in his line as fast as his nervous fingers would permit, had laid his rod down, and was now rushing along the bank, stumbling over roots, scrambling along shelving places, and all the time shouting encouragement and advice.

For Mr. Love had a bite. And such a bite! His slender, lance-wood rod was bent almost double under the strain, and far out in the stream the line was cutting the water, back and forth, here, there, and in a circle, with mighty tugs.

"More line! More line!" shouted old Mr. Grove frantically, as he rushed towards the scene of the struggle. Grudgingly, Mr. Love released a few inches more of his cherished silk line, and for a moment

the slender rod was relieved of its strain, only to be nearly snapped by another terrific rush of the captive.

"Line's 'most out!" shouted Mr. Love, breathless with his struggle. "He's got 'most all of it, and he wants more. There he goes!" he shouted, as with a great, sideways shoot the fish tore through the water straight across the stream.

"Don't let him get in the riffle!" howled Mr. Grove. "Don't let him get in the riffle! He's a big one, all right. He's a big one! He's a big one! Play him! Play him! Hold him! The weeds! *The weeds!* Look out for the weeds! If he gets into them, he's a goner!"

"I wish I had a heavy rod," gasped Mr. Love, oblivious of the fact that he had stepped into the water half way up to his knees. "He hasn't given me an inch of line yet, and I'm down to the last turn on the reel. I'm afraid he'll break the rod if I keep him on the spring of it, and if I let out straight he'll break the line."

"Let me take him for a minute," begged Mr. Grove cajolingly.

"Not for a thousand dollars," retorted Mr. Love indignantly. "I haven't had a bite like this in years."

"There! He's easing up!" chirped Mr. Grove, jumping up and down on the bank. "Reel in easy, now! Faster than that! Faster! He's getting slack on you! My Gumpy! I wish you had my automatic on there. Never mind the reel; pull in the line and catch it with your thumb," shouted Mr. Grove, unmindful of the famed skill of his friend, and of the fact that each bit of advice he gave was anticipated.

Suddenly the big fish darted away again, and, in spite of Mr. Love's best care, the line snarled and clogged in the guides, and in an instant the slender pole was bending like a palm tree in a typhoon. Mr. Grove teetered up and down, opening and shutting his mouth in helpless sympathy.

The great fish tugged and threshed far out in the stream. Once he breached clear of the water, a monster indeed, his slender sides glistening in the sunlight, and his body, bent like a supple bow, making a graceful, beautiful picture—but a maddening one to the two helpless men who watched the splendid struggle of the magnificent pickerel.

Then came a fearful rush, and with a splintering snap the rod broke close by the second joint. An instant later the taut, straightened line parted, and the big fish was gone.

"Too bad!" commiserated Mr. Grove as Mr. Love reeled in what was left of his line, and made a pitiful attempt to straighten the broken pole. "'Twas fun while it lasted, though," he added philosophically.

Together the two old men tramped down the bank, discussing

the size of the big fish. Suddenly Mr. Grove gave a wild shout and broke into a clumsy, old man's run. "Look!" he shouted.

Mr. Love looked, then he, too, started down the bank in wild leaps. So that his minnow bait might not die, Mr. Grove had left the end of his line in the water, and now the pole on the bank was indulging in strange gyrations, while a taut line led from it out into the stream.

"The big fellow's come down and gobbled yours!" shouted Mr. Love, spurting into the lead just as Mr. Grove slipped on a shelving place and slid a few feet on one side toward the water. "Don't you touch that pole!" howled the latter, even as he fell.

"He'll have the whole thing in the water in another minute," protested Mr. Love, tearing along.

"I don't care. Don't you touch that pole;" and Mr. Grove arrived just in time to grasp the end of the rod as it was pulled over the edge of the bank. But the struggle lasted only for a moment, for the line had fouled in the weeds, and with a mighty tug the big fellow tore loose from the hook and was gone again.

"Not a word of this," said Mr. Love, as they drove home. "Why, if people heard that there was a twenty-pound pickerel in that pond, there'd be a crowd there every day, and the sport would be spoiled."

"Twenty pounds?" commented Mr. Grove. "If he didn't weigh nearer twenty-four, I hope never to bait another hook."

"Mebbe so, mebbe so," replied Mr. Love doubtfully. "I never heard of a true pickerel weighing as much as that, but he certainly wasn't a pike." And so the two old men kept their secret, and day after day they fished in Gillette's pond, patiently endeavoring to capture the big fish.

They used every bit of skill they possessed all through the spring and well into the summer, but though they frequently caught fine fish, never once did the monster pickerel deign to accept their lures.

Finally, on the first of August, the two old fishermen approached their favorite trees by the water-side early in the morning. But another fisherman was before them. He was perhaps twelve years old, barefooted, dressed in two garments, and there was only one piece of the brim of his straw hat which had not been torn away, as is proper for the first of August. Placidly and contentedly he was fishing with a pole made of an old rake handle, a line of such stuff as small express bundles are tied with, a cob for a bobber, and a hook such as you can get at Watters' General Store in exchange for one egg. Mr. Love, who disliked children, scowled with disgust. Mr. Grove, who was a friend of all youngsters, said encouragingly, "I believe you've got a nibble."

Up came the pole with a reckless jerk. High over the head of the

lad a luckless chub, possibly four inches long, was flung far up the bank. The tiny fish was not dislodged, and in a fit of sulky disgust the lad slatted the hook, with the unfortunate chub still attached, back into the water.

Mr. Grove had started forward with a "Don't-scare-the-fish" ejaculation on the tip of his tongue, when something remarkable happened. The line became taut as a fiddle string, the stiff pole was drawn down, down, until it was almost parallel with the cord, and slowly, inch by inch, his little bare heels digging into the turf of the bank, and his hands slipping on the smooth rake handle, the lad was being dragged toward the water.

Excited beyond measure, both men rushed to assist him, but the farmer boy was a true sportsman. "Keep your hands off'n that pole!" he shouted. "He's mine. I can handle him, consarn him!" And with a sudden twist he faced about, and, with the pole over his shoulder, trudged sturdily up the bank, digging his toes into the turf, dropping on his knees, tugging and straining, but never relaxing for a moment.

Struggle as he would, ignominiously out of the water came the monstrous pickerel of Gillette's Dam, hooked, beyond all escape, by the hook which was bought in exchange for one egg at Watters' General Store.

That the fish weighed fourteen pounds three and one-half ounces, is a mere detail of the sporting history of Gillette's Dam in the old days when the fishing was good.



## HER LETTER

BY BETH SLATER WHITSON

I T breathes of yellow jasmine blooms,  
 A sunset garden's faint perfumes—  
 So well remembered I would dare  
 To say they floated from her hair.  
 And once more, in a dream, I press  
 My lips against a fragrant tress,  
 A fragrant mouth, a rose-leaf face,  
 And trusting eyes that bear the trace  
 Of good-by tears. Ah, heart of mine,  
 My tears are blotting each dear line'

# WALNUTS AND WINE



## THE FARMER'S FIRE

They sat in the engine house while the retired district chief, pensioned after many injuries and long years of service, smoked the pipe of peace and talked of men and horses.

"When I hear a fool yarn like that," he said, after hearing an amusing story, "I always think of an experience I had while on my vacation, a good many years ago.

"I went up to New Hampshire to a farm-house near a lake where I knew there was good bass fishing; I thought I might be able to forget fires for a couple of weeks.

"Well, I had arranged with the farmer who lived on the next place—Eben Harris was his name—to go out fishing early one morning, and at half-past three he rapped on my window. Calling to him that I would be with him in a few minutes, I jumped into my clothes, and as I was going out told my wife that I would go down to the well and bring up a couple of pails of water before I left.

"I filled the pails, and as I came back again my friend the farmer rushed out to the middle of the road, shouting: 'John!' 'John' was the name of his hired man.

"Another step or two and I could see the rear of Harris's house. Flames were leaping from the kitchen window, and a full-grown fire seemed to be under way. I called to Harris to come along, and made for the kitchen. But Harris ran into the house by the front



## Walnuts and Wine

door. I threw the water that I had in the pails on the kitchen door, and got standing room inside. Then I ran back and forth to the well, and was able to hold the fire in check until more men came, and formed a bucket line to pass water to me.

"As I was coming back on one of my trips to the well a window opened on the second story, and the hired man flew out. He had on only a shirt, and he jumped into a big rose bush. He took his place in the bucket brigade as soon as it was formed, and I didn't know until afterward that he had half a day's work ahead of him pulling out the thorns. That hired man was game.

"It was a hot fire, but after awhile we got it out, and had kept it confined to the kitchen.

"Then I remembered that I had not seen anything of Harris's wife and his two young children.

"I went up-stairs, and the house was pretty full of smoke. After a good deal of groping, I located the room, got the children in my arms, and led the woman out of the house.

"Then we hunted up Harris. We found him on the grass outside in a dead faint.

"It seems that when I went for the kitchen he had grabbed an axe and had started up-stairs. He went straight to the room of the hired man, put both hands on the door-knob, and pulled back—the door opened inward. All the time he was yelling: 'John!' But the hired man couldn't open the door because Harris was holding it fast.

"When at last the door wouldn't open Harris dropped the knob for an instant, picked up the axe, and drove it through the panel.

"Now, John was pulling on the knob from the other side, and all this time not a word had been said about fire. When the axe blade came through the door, it missed John's head by about an inch. He decided that Harris had gone crazy, and that was when he jumped through the window.

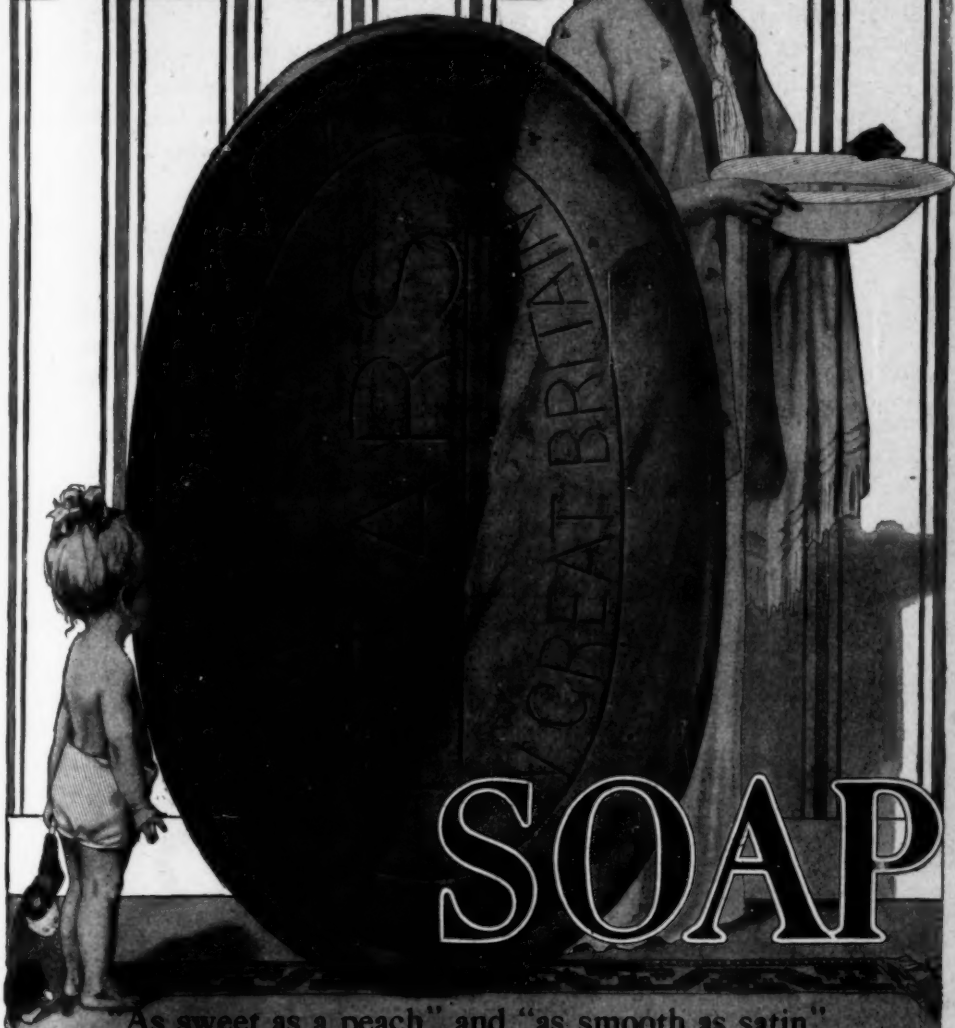
"Just as John had jumped, the farmer got into the room. He found it empty, and promptly went down-stairs and fainted in the place where we had found him.

"I have seen people do some queer things at fires, but I never could figure out why that man put in his time trying to save his hired man, and left his wife and children, for all he knew, to burn."

H. C. S.

Walnuts and Wine

# PEARS'



"As sweet as a peach" and "as smooth as satin"  
is baby's skin after a bath with Pears' Soap

## Matchless for the Complexion

OF ALL SCENTED SOAPS PEARS' OTTO OF ROSE IS THE BEST.

*"All rights secured."*

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

## Walnuts and Wine

### A VACUUM INSIDE?

Little Tom, who had just begun to inquire the "why and wherefore" of things, amused his father one day by asking if the ear muffs which he saw the policeman wear were held in place by suction!

*F. B. Phipps*

### HER ENDORSEMENT

A bride's mother presented her with a check on Christmas day. With a feeling of the utmost importance she took it down to the bank in which her husband had opened an account for her. The cashier took the check, then handed it back politely, saying :

"Will you please endorse it, madam?"

"Endorse it?" repeated the bride, puzzled.

"Yes, across the back, you know," replied the man, too busy to notice her bewilderment.

The bride carried the check to a desk, laid it face downward, and nibbled the end of a pen thoughtfully. Then inspiration came. Dipping the pen, she wrote triumphantly across the back : "For Fanny, from Mother, Christmas, 1906."

*Helen Sherman Griffith*

### THE AUTOGRAFTER

*By Charles I. Junkin*

Know'st thou the fearsome Autografter?

He 's not a beast for ribald laughter,

This product of the Gasolinic Age!

His claws are sharp, stop-watcher'd, greedy,

His eyes are keen to spy the Speedy,

He roareth mighty Swearings in his rage.

He scents afar the Autopurses;

His hide is tough, nor tears nor curses

Can stay him as he leaps upon his prey ;

He pounceth on the Autobiler,

He makes him dance like any Spieler,

A hold-up merry, in the good old way!

He drags him to the smiling Justice

(Who knows full well just where the dust is,

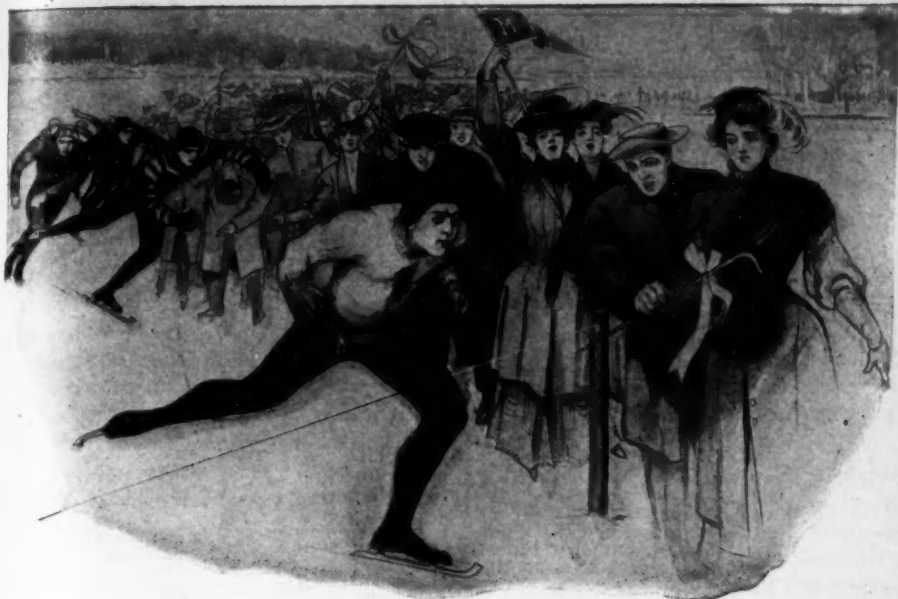
Who 's loaded with the Legislative Text);

He writes him in the Legal Docket,

And empties out the Autopocket,

And then he hies him forth to seize the Next!

## Walnuts and Wine



## ENDURANCE

You cannot go under the wire as a real winner in life's race unless you have physical strength to carry on your work.

No one can afford the handicap of a weak body or shaky nerves, from improper food.

There is a true, dependable food, safe to rely on.

## Grape-Nuts

contains certain elements selected by a food expert from wheat and barley which make the kind of muscle, brain, and nerves that endure.

## "There's a Reason"

Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," found in pkgs. of Grape Nuts.

---

Postum Cereal Co., Ltd., Battle Creek, Mich., U. S. A.

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

## Walnuts and Wine

### THE CONSEQUENCE

"Is it true that Waldorf died poor?"

"Yes. You see, he lost his health chasing after fortune, and then lost his fortune chasing after health."

*Adam Gregorius*

### FILLING A LONG-FELT WANT

*By E. G. Nedloh*

"Give us a national ode!"

The American people cried.  
But Teddy's our National Him,  
And there's Uncle Psalm, beside.

### IT WAS CERTAINLY CHINA

A post-office inspector tells this story of a new clerk at the Chicago post-office.

One day a young man approached the stamp window and, thrusting in a letter, asked:

"How much postage on this letter to Dresden?"

Tossing the missive on a scale to determine its weight, the new clerk promptly replied: "Ten cents."

"But," mildly objected the inquirer, "I've never paid more than five cents before. Is it overweight?"

"No," was the guileless reply; "but all mails addressed to China call for ten cents postage now."

*Edwin Tarrissac*

### NATURALLY

"They say that Bradley goes on like mad since he inherited his vast wealth."

"What does he do?"

"Oh, he acts like one possessed."

*Henry Miller*

### Q. E. D.

Miss Sentimental: "Did your sister's engagement to Mr. Swell end happily?"

Mr. Cynic: "Oh, no; they married."

*J. D.*



# Soap Sense *and* Soap Scents

**A** SOAP can be pure and yet be made from refuse grease, cheap vegetable oils and rosin; but, if quality is the desired end, it must contain not only pure ingredients, but those of the *highest-grade*.

The basis of all soaps—that is, the soap stock formula, is largely the same; but the quality of the ingredients used is as varied as the names of the soaps themselves.

A highly perfumed, nice-smelling, high-priced soap is not of necessity a good, high-grade soap.

The basic stock in a 25c or 50c soap may be no higher grade than that in a 5c good quality soap—may not be as good, in fact, but, with the aid of artificial coloring matter and high priced perfumes, the body of the soap is literally “doped” until it loses its identity. It is virtually masquerading in a false role. The public, however, buys and uses it in blissful ignorance of its lack of efficiency.

Good soap is naturally white. If coloring matter or high perfumes are incorporated they add nothing to the virtue or efficiency of the product—more often they are used to cover up the inferior quality of the raw materials and the greasy smell.

Quality in soap, therefore, does not go hand-in-hand with high prices.

FAIRY SOAP, for instance, sells for 5c a cake. It is just as pure and high-grade as any soap can be. It is made from Edible Beef Fat, and first quality coconut oil.

It is the excess of alkali—known as free alkali—and rosin, which adulterate and cheapen soaps, and do damage to the skin.

FAIRY SOAP contains no free alkali or rosin—it is just soap, pure soap, nothing but the best soap.

Pay any price you may and you will not find a better quality of materials than go into every 5c cake of FAIRY SOAP.

You can, therefore, favor your pocket-book, as well as guard your skin by using FAIRY SOAP.

## Fairy Soap

Pure as the Thoughts of Childhood

It will not irritate and stop up the pores like soap made from cheap materials.

It will cleanse thoroughly, soothe and soften the skin, impart the glow of health to the entire body and make every nerve tingle with renewed vitality.

FAIRY SOAP—the handy oval cake—is sold only in cartons and daintily wrapped in tissue.

It has the appearance, as well as the ingredients of quality.

Ask any good grocer or druggist for FAIRY SOAP.

THE  
N. K. FAIRBANK  
COMPANY,  
Chicago

Fairy Soap was  
granted highest  
possible awards  
at both St. Louis  
and Portland  
Expositions.



“Have You a Little Fairy in Your Home?”

## Walnuts and Wine

### IDENTIFIED

Senator Tillman tells a story on himself as to how he was identified by a post-office money order clerk when he first arrived at the Capital City.

After being in the city a few days he dropped in at the post-office to cash a money order.

"Do you know any one here who could identify you?" asked the clerk.

"Well, no," the Senator answered. "Is that necessary? I am Ben Tillman, of South Carolina."

The clerk smiled, then asked the Senator if he didn't have some letters or papers that would make him known to the post-office authorities.

The Senator had put on a new suit that morning, and had neglected to transfer his letters, but he had his pocket-book with him. Digging down in his trousers pocket, he drew forth his wallet and proceeded to search for an article of identification, but could find nothing but a small photograph of himself.

"This will do, I suppose," he said, handing it to the money order clerk.

"Why, sure! That's you, all right," remarked the man behind the counter, handing over the cash.

*Frank N. Bauskett*

### A REAL FRIEND

"Red" Wright was a man of quick and furious temper, while Jim Donovan was as calm and unemotional as his partner was violent.

The two prospectors were cooking breakfast in their mountain camp one morning when the coffee-pot happened to be "Red's" particular charge. The bacon, under Donovan's supervision, was almost done, so "Red" set the coffee-pot on the fire for a final boil. One of the sticks burned in two and the pot upset. "Red" flew into a rage, and, jumping for the coffee-pot, he kicked it from one end of the camp to the other, and back again. Donovan watched him with calm interest, and when Red's fury had expended itself Donovan pulled his six-shooter and filled the coffee-pot full of holes.

"By gracious, man!" cried "Red," wringing his hands. "What did you do that for? We can't make no more coffee!"

"Do you think I'm goin' to stand here and see a son-of-a-gun of a coffee-pot get the best of a friend of mine?" demanded Donovan as he returned to his bacon.

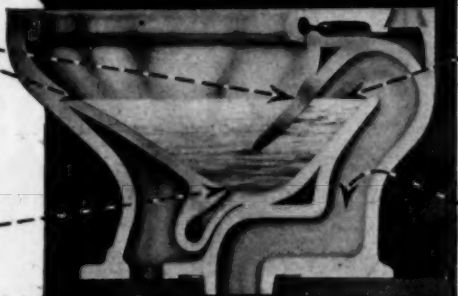
*Caroline Lockhart*

Walnuts and Wine

## What to Demand in a Closet

Absolute cleanliness assured by water capacity and width of water surface in bowl.

Water jet at bottom of bowl, which cleanses inside of trap and insures bowl being absolutely washed out.



Water seal of unusual depth, making escape of sewer gas impossible.

Vacuum chamber into which entire contents of bowl are drawn by syphonic action.

To know what a closet should be to be safe, study the sectional view showing the principle and action of the SY-CLO Closet. If *your* closet is not self-cleaning, odorless, positive in its action when flushed, replace it with the SY-CLO Closet,—“the closet of health.”

The SY-CLO Closet overcomes the offensive and dangerous faults of the common closet of the wash out variety by its syphonic action. In addition to a copious flush of water from above, a powerful jet of water enters at the bottom of the bowl. This starts the flow of water over the retaining rim into the soil pipe, where a vacuum, or suction is formed, into which the entire contents of the bowl are drawn. If *your* closet merely empties without thoroughly washing the bowl, replace it with the

# SY-CLO

TRADE MARK

The SY-CLO Closet as shown by the illustration of the sectional view, is formed in a single piece—fine hand moulded china—without a crack or crevice where impurity can lodge. Unaffected by water, acid or wear. No enamel to chip or crack. If *your* closet is different in any respect, it is unsafe. Replace it with the SY-CLO.

The name “SY-CLO” on a closet guarantees that it is made under the direction and supervision of the Potteries Selling Company, of the best materials, and with the aid of the best engineering skill, and has the united endorsement of eighteen of the leading potteries of America.

**FREE.**—Send us the name of your plumber, and we will send you a valuable booklet—“Household Health.” It will tell you how to be certain of the sanitation of your home, and may explain the cause of past illnesses you have never understood.

Lavatories of every size and design made of the same material as the SY-CLO Closet.

**POTTERIES SELLING CO., Trenton, N. J.**

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

## Walnuts and Wine

### CAUSE SUFFICIENT

"What made Scribbler's book take the public favor at a bound? It's going into the hundred thousands."

"It's all owing to a mistake of a printer."

"How was that?"

"The reviewer said the book was 'immortal,' and the printer omitted the 't.'"

*Viola Gardner Brown*

### CHANGED, YET THE SAME

A Southern man, who has for some years past been established in New York, recently visited his former home in Virginia. Whilst there he was busy renewing old acquaintances. Among these was the son of an old preacher whom the former Virginian remembered as having invariably discoursed on the same topic.

"Heard father since you've been back?" asked the son.

"I am sorry to say that I have not," said the other. "Tell me," he added, with a smile, "is he preaching that same old sermon?"

"Oh, yes," replied the son, not at all taken aback by the question; "but for the last year or two he's been hollering in different parts of it."

*Edwin Tarrisse*

### TUKKEY ROSE

*By Mary Coles Carrington*

Dyah's a gal on our plantation

An' dee calls huh "Tukkey Rose";

She's a mighty homely creetur,

An' she tu'ns in bofe huh toes;

But w'en I heah huh holler—(Heish!)

"Coop-ee! Coop-ee! Coop-ee!"

W'y, Lawdy, son, I *got* ter run;

No use ter hender me.

Oh, Tukkey Rose, youse little,

Yo' face hit sho' am black;

You got a mos' owdacious way

Uv answerin' uv me back;

But someways I cyarn he'p it

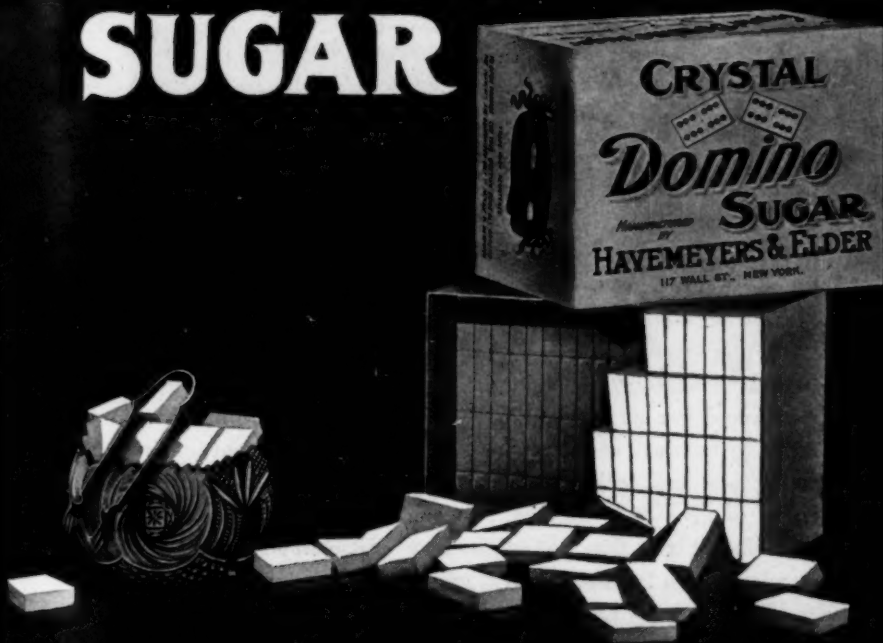
(You cunjer me, I s'pose);

Look like I *boun'* ter lub yer.

Won't yer be *my* Tukkey Rose?

Walnuts and Wine

# CRYSTAL Domino SUGAR



**SOLD ONLY IN 5<sup>lb</sup> SEALED BOXES!**

Imagination could not conceive of a handier and prettier form than is presented in "CRYSTAL DOMINO SUGAR." Neither could the most particular people ask for more perfect purity, or economical people for less waste  
(BEST SUGAR FOR TEA AND COFFEE!)  
**BY GROCERS EVERYWHERE!**

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.



## Walnuts and Wine

Now, Tukkey Rose, dee say you ten'  
De tukkeys mighty good,  
Fer marster say he git mo' fowls  
En what he useter could;  
But ef you'll lemme jine yer,  
Ole marster he shell see  
We bofe kin holler, good an' loud,  
"Coop-ee!  
Coop-ee!  
Coop-ee-ee-ee-ee-ee!"

### A "RARE COMPLIMENT"

Near the Hole-in-the-Wall country, in Wyoming, there is a peppery old cattleman whose range is as dear to him as his life, and from whose point of view a sheepman is a pariah. His nearest neighbor is a strenuous and belligerent widow who keeps sheep. In consequence the line between their two ranges is as clearly defined as was the dead-line at Libbey prison.

Upon one occasion, however, the widow's sheep strayed upon the cattleman's range, and the old rancher's rage was great. He denounced her as a "trollop." This epithet as applied to herself came to the ears of the widow, and, vowing vengeance, she hurried home to search for the word in her dictionary. But her dictionary knew naught of "trollops," so she sent away for a later edition and had it freighted in. The new dictionary when it came was as silent upon the subject of "trollops" as the old one, so the widow saddled her horse and rode some twenty miles to consult a ranchman whose educational advantages had been somewhat superior to those of his neighbors.

He listened attentively while she explained the circumstances.

"And now," she demanded, "what did he mean? What is a trollop?"

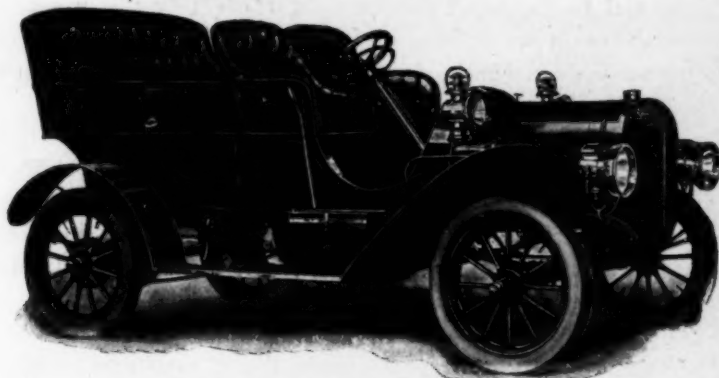
"'Trollop,' madam," he replied gravely, "is a very difficult word to define. Its meaning is subtle and elusive. It's hard to put into words, but it's a rare compliment Old Man B—— has paid you. In olden days 'trollop' was a synonymous term for 'Queen of Sheba,' but as near as we can come at its meaning—nowadays the definition would be 'The Sheep Queen of Poison Creek.'"

"Is that so!" exclaimed the mollified widow. "I've wronged that man. I'll stop and ask him over for supper on my way back."

Caroline Lockhart

Walnuts and Wine

# Rambler



**Model 21, Price \$1,350.**

## **The Most Efficient Car of Its Type Ever Built**

The Rambler Model 21—the logical result of seven years of scientific development of the simple power plant.

In this car a double opposed motor, multiple disc clutch and planetary transmission are entirely enclosed as an integral unit with three-point support.

Accessibility is carried to a point never before acquired—the tilting body and constructive design enables every working part to be easily and entirely reached from above.

Write today for our catalogue describing this, our new runabout and two four-cylinder touring cars. It will give you information you ought to have before buying a car.

**Main Office and Factory, Kenosha, Wis., U. S. A.**

**Branches:**

Chicago, Milwaukee,  
New York Agency, 38-40 W. 62nd St.

Boston,

Philadelphia,

San Francisco.

Representatives in all leading cities.

**Thomas B. Jeffery & Company**

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

## Walnuts and Wine

### A WONDERFUL RUSE

The late A. M. Simpson, the oldest Odd Fellow in the world, had the following experience at a New York theatre some years ago:

In those days women weren't compelled to take their hats off in the theatre. Consequently a good many kept their hats on, and the people behind saw nothing of the stage. Mr. Simpson sat in his orchestra chair, enjoying the play famously, when a woman in a two-foot hat plumped down in the seat in front of him. He sighed. He sat, so to speak, on tiptoe. He craned his neck to the right and to the left. But in vain. Now that this woman had come, he could see nothing of the stage. He saw only two black ostrich plumes, a bunch of grapes, a humming bird, and a bow of pink satin ribbon.

Mr. Simpson was a modest man. It was not his nature to disturb any one. Nevertheless, he did not often get to a New York theatre, and now that he was in one, he did not propose to miss its benefits through no fault of his own. So, after a good deal of silent suffering and a good deal of bashful hesitation, he leaned forward, touched the woman in front of him, and said in the politest tone:

"Madam, will you kindly take off your hat?"

The woman ignored him—ignored him absolutely. He said a little more loudly:

"Will you please take off that big hat, madam? I can see nothing behind it."

She turned, gave him a scornful, withering look, and settled back into her former position.

"Madam," said Mr. Simpson very firmly, "if you do not remove that hat, something most unpleasant will happen."

She ignored him again.

Mr. Simpson reached down under the seat, got his hat, and put it on. Instantly, from all parts of the house, there came a loud and ferocious chorus:

"Here, take off that hat!"

"Hats off!"

"Hats off down front!"

"Take off your hat!"

"Off with your hat! Off with it!"

The woman removed her hat instantly. At the same moment Mr. Simpson, chuckling, removed his own. Then the uproar ceased.

*Charles S. Gerlach*

Walnuts and Wine

# MENNEN'S

B O R A T E D   T A L C U M

# TOILET POWDER



Mennen's Borated Talcum Toilet Powder used daily renders the most tender skin proof against **chapping** and the usual ill effects of wind and weather. **Mennen's** soothes, heals, and preserves the most delicate complexion.

Put up in **non-refillable boxes**, for your protection. If Mennen's face is on the cover, it's **genuine and a guarantee of purity**. Sold everywhere, or by mail, 25 cents. **Sample free.** Delightful after shaving.

## GERHARD MENNEN CO.

Newark, N. J.

Try Mennen's Violet (Borated) Talcum Powder

It has the scent of fresh cut Violets



## Walnuts and Wine

### THE SAME THING

Officer Hausmann was noted on the force for his soft heart. Pacing one day back and forth in his blue coat, swinging his club, he saw some distance away a woman reel dizzily for a moment and then seat herself unsteadily on the curb stone. She was poorly dressed and carried a large basket.

The officer hurried to her. "Madam," he said, in his most sympathetic tones, "have you vertigo?"

Lifting an anxious face to his, she replied wearily, "About five blocks."

*E. W. Mattson*

### A PET NAME

*By Carolyn Wells*

A dentist, whose surname was Moss,  
Fell in love with the charming Miss Ross;  
But he held in abhorrence  
Her Christian name, Florence,  
So he called her his Dental Floss.

### PERHAPS HE MEANT IT

P—— is usually a self-possessed young man; but the other day when dining out he was unexpectedly called upon to say grace, and the best he could do was to deliver himself of the following:

"O Lord, bless our sins and forgive this food. Amen."

*W. H. Clemons*

### STILL WITH THE FIRM

A big New York wholesale house not long ago started a certain drummer on the road, giving him two hundred dollars for traveling expenses. Two weeks passed and nothing was heard from him. Finally, the house, becoming impatient, telegraphed the delinquent as follows:

No advices from you since you left. Are you still with us?

In a little while the answer came:

Referring yours of fifteenth. Have drawn on you for two hundred and fifty dollars additional. Am still with you.

*Edwin Tarrisse*



# Lippincott's Biographical Dictionary

**T**HE great strides in every field of human activity during the century just closed have added thousands of new names to the lists of those whom the world delights to honor, a fact which the publishers of "LIPPINCOTT'S PRONOUNCING DICTIONARY OF BIOGRAPHY AND MYTHOLOGY" have recognized by giving that notable work of reference a thorough and extended revision.

The biographical notices included in previous editions have been brought down to date, and a great number of new names have been added: so that the book in its latest edition is complete to the opening year of the twentieth century, and stands to-day—as always since the publication of its first edition—without a peer among works of similar intent and scope. Among the many features of excellence which have called forth the highest praise from hundreds of men prominent in the affairs of mankind may be cited specifically the admirable system of Orthography, repeated on every page for the sake of convenience; and the comprehensive plan of Pronunciation, the data for which were secured by Dr. Thomas during an extended sojourn in Europe and the Orient.

Subscription Edition in 2 large 8vo vols. 2550 double-column pages.  
Buckram, \$15.00; half russia, \$17.50; half morocco, \$20.00

**Publishers—J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY—Philadelphia**

## It's Easy for a Housewife

to decide which article is best by testing at home, and when a sufficient quantity for that purpose can be had for nothing, it is unwise not to make the test.

If you have Silverware, drop a postal to "Silicon," 30 Cliff Street, New York City, and you will receive, free of cost, a trial quantity of Electro-Silicon. The secret of keeping silverware bright and beautiful will then be revealed to you, and we promise you will be well repaid for your trouble.

Electro-Silicon is a powder of absolute purity and fineness, imparting a wonderful luster, with little labor, and without the slightest injury to the most delicate surfaces of silverware and all fine metals. Its merits have secured for it the commendation of housekeepers everywhere.

It is sold by grocers and druggists generally, or sent postpaid by the manufacturers on receipt of 15 cts. per box in stamps.



*For Children While Cutting Their Teeth.*

**An Old and Well-Tried Remedy,**

**FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS.**

## MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP

has been used for over FIFTY YEARS by MILLIONS of MOTHERS for their CHILDREN WHILE TEETHING with PERFECT SUCCESS. IT SOOTHES THE CHILD, SOFTENS THE GUMS, ALLAYS ALL PAIN, CURES WIND COLIC, and is the best remedy for DIARRHŒA. Sold by all Druggists in every part of the world. Be sure and ask for **Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup**, and take no other kind.

**TWENTY-FIVE CENTS A BOTTLE.**

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

## Walnuts and Wine

### SAVING THE SITUATION

The manager of a New York theatre tells of the quickness of thought of a certain actor. The play being produced was a good, old-fashioned melodrama, with a snow-storm in the second act. The first act was a drawing-room. In this scene the hard-hearted parent orders his daughter from his house, and, as she remains, imploring his forgiveness, he pulls the bell-cord for a servant, that she may be removed by force.

All went well until this point was reached. Unluckily, however, instead of pulling the bell-cord, he caught the one which opened the snow-box, and instantly the large white flakes filled the air and covered the carpet and furniture.

"Bah! I have opened the skylight!" the actor said, with well-simulated disgust, and gave the proper cord an angry jerk.

*Emmett C. Hall*

### DEAD LANGUAGE

*By E. G. Nedloh*

As Mr. Todtman's obsequies

Were closed at his late residence,

All were as free the corpse to see

As though it were a president's.

The minister fair English spoke,

Though slightly German in its sound;

The mourners into laughter broke

When he said: "Pass the bier aroundt."

### OR SO IT SEEMED

A little three-year-old was on his first visit in the country. His mother allowed him to go out in the fields and see the fowls fed and the cows milked. Soon he came running to her in great excitement and concern.

"Mamma, mamma," he called, "the calf is eating up the cow!"

*Minette Teichmueller*

### EXPLAINED

*She:* "I wonder why Henry James has never attempted a historical romance?"

*He:* "Impossible! That kind demands a period."

*W. F. Rico*